MARGOT ASQUITH

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

IN TWO VOLUMES

WITH TWENTY-FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS
AND NUMEROUS REPRODUCTIONS OF
ORIGINAL DRAWINGS

"Prudence is a rich, ugly old maid
wooed by incapacity."

Blake.

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MARGOT ASQUITH AS SHE
IS TODAY

MARGOT ASQUITH

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

VOLUME ONE

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I DEDICATE
THIS BOOK
TO
MY HUSBAND

What? Have you not received powers, to the limits of which you will bear all that befalls? Have you not received magnanimity? Have you not received courage? Have you not received endurance?—EPICTETUS

PREFACE

When I began this book I feared that its merit would depend upon how faithfully I could record my own impressions of people and events: when I had finished it I was certain of it. Had it been any other kind of book the judgment of those nearest me would have been invaluable, but, being what it is, it had to be entirely my own; since whoever writes as he speaks must take the whole responsibility, and to ask "Do you think I may say this?" or "write that?" is to shift a little of that responsibility on to someone else. This I could not bear to do, above all in the case of my husband, who sees these recollections for the first time now. My only literary asset is natural directness, and that faculty would have been paralysed if I thought anything that I have written here would implicate him. I would rather have made a hundred blunders of style or discretion than seem, even to myself, let alone the world at large, to have done that.

Unlike many memoirists, the list of people I have to thank in this preface is short: Lord Crewe

and Mr. Texeira de Mattos—who alone saw my MS. before its completion—for their careful criticisms which in no way committed them to approving of all that I have written; Mr. Edmund Gosse and Mr. Desmond MacCarthy, for valuable suggestions; and my typist, Miss Lea, for her silence and quickness.

There are not many then of whom I can truly say, "Without their approval and encouragement this book would never have been written"—but those who really love me will forgive me and know that what I owe them is deeper than thanks.

MARGOT ASQUITH.

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MARGOT ASQUITH
AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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CHAPTER I

THE TENNANT FAMILY—MARGOT, ONE OF TWELVE CHILDREN—HOME LIFE IN GLEN, SCOTLAND—FATHER A SELF-CENTRED BUSINESS-MAN; HIS VANITIES; HIS PRIDE IN HIS CHILDREN—NEWS OF HIS DEATH—HANDSOME LORD RIBBLESDALE VISITS GLEN—MOTHER DELICATE; HER LOVE OF ECONOMY; CONFIDENCES—TENNANT GIRLS' LOVE AFFAIRS

I WAS born in the country of Hogg and Scott between the Yarrow and the Tweed, in the year 1864.

I am one of twelve children, but I only knew eight, as the others died when I was young. My eldest sister Pauline—or Posie, as we called her—was born in 1855 and married on my tenth birthday one of the best of men, Thomas Gordon Duff.* She died of tuberculosis, the cruel disease by which

*Thomas Gordon Duff, of Drummuir Castle, Keith.

my family have all been pursued. We were too different in age and temperament to be really intimate, but her goodness, patience and pluck made a deep impression on me.

My second sister, Charlotte, was born in 1858 and married, when I was thirteen, the present Lord Ribblesdale, in 1877. She was the only member of the family—except my brother Edward Glenconner—who was tall. My mother attributed this—and her good looks—to her wet-nurse, Janet Mercer, a mill-girl at Innerleithen, noted for her height and beauty. Charty—as we called her—was in some ways the most capable of us all, but she had not Laura's genius, Lucy's talents, nor my understanding. She had wonderful grace and less vanity than any one that ever lived; and her social courage was a perpetual joy. I heard her say to the late Lord Rothschild, one night at a dinner party:

"And do you still believe the Messiah is coming, Lord Natty?"

Once when her husband went to make a political speech in the country, she telegraphed to him:

"Mind you hit below the belt!"

She was full of nature and impulse, free, enter-

prising and unconcerned. She rode as well as I did, but was not so quick to hounds nor so conscious of what was going on all round her.

One day when the Rifle Brigade was quartered at Winchester, Ribblesdale—who was a captain—sent Charty out hunting with old Tubb, the famous dealer, from whom he had hired her mount. As he could not accompany her himself, he was anxious to know how her ladyship had got on; the old rascal—wanting to sell his horse—raised his eyes to heaven and gasped:

"Hornamental palings! My lord!!"

It was difficult to find a better-looking couple than Charty and Ribblesdale; I have often observed people following them in picture-galleries; and their photographs appeared in many of the London shop-windows.

My next sister, Lucy,* was the most talented and the best educated of the family. She fell between two stools in her youth, because Charty and Posie were of an age to be companions and Laura and I; consequently she did not enjoy the happy childhood that we did and was mishandled by the authorities both in the nursery and the schoolroom.

*Mrs. Graham Smith, of Easton Grey, Malmesbury.

When I was thirteen she made a foolish engagement, so that our real intimacy only began after her marriage. She was my mother's favourite child—which none of us resented—and, although like my father in hospitality, courage and generous giving, she had my mother's stubborn modesty and delicacy of mind. Her fear of hurting the feelings of others was so great that she did not tell people what she was thinking; she was truthful but not candid. Her drawings—both in pastel and water-colour—her portraits, landscapes and interiors were further removed from amateur work than Laura's piano-playing or my dancing; and, had she put her wares into the market, as we all wanted her to do years ago, she would have been a rich woman, but like all saints she was uninfluenceable. I owe her too much to write about her: tormented by pain and crippled by arthritis, she has shown a heroism and gaiety which command the love and respect of all who meet her.

Of my other sister, Laura, I will write later.

The boys of the family were different from the girls, though they all had charm and an excellent sense of humour. My mother said the difference between her boys and girls came from circulation,

and would add, "The Winsloes always had cold feet"; but I think it lay in temper and temperament. They would have been less apprehensive and more serene if they had been brought up to some settled profession; and they were quite clever enough to do most things well.

My brother Jack* was petted and mismanaged in his youth. He had a good figure, but his height was arrested by his being allowed, when he was a little fellow, to walk twelve to fifteen miles a day with the shooters; and, however tired he would be, he was taken out of bed to play billiards after dinner. Leather footstools were placed one on the top of the other by a proud papa and the company made to watch this lovely little boy score big breaks; excited and exhausted, he would go to bed long after midnight, with praises singing in his ears.

"You are more like lions than sisters!" he said one day in the nursery when we snubbed him.

In making him his Parliamentary Secretary, my husband gave him his first chance; and in spite of his early training and teasing he turned his life to good account.

*The Right Hon. H. J. Tennant.

In the terrible years 1914, 1915 and 1916, he was Under-Secretary for War to the late Lord Kitchener and was finally made Secretary for Scotland, with a seat in the Cabinet. Like every Tennant, he had tenderness and powers of emotion and showed much affection and generosity to his family. He was a fine sportsman with an exceptionally good eye for games.

My brother Frank * was the artist among the boys. He had a perfect ear for music and eye for colour and could distinguish what was beautiful in everything he saw. He had the sweetest temper of any of us and the most humility.

In his youth he had a horrible tutor who showed him a great deal of cruelty; and this retarded his development. One day at Glen, I saw this man knock Frank down. Furious and indignant, I said, "You brute!" and hit him over the head with both my fists. After he had boxed my ears, Laura protested, saying she would tell my father, whereupon he toppled her over on the floor and left the room.

When I think of our violent teachers—both tutors and governesses—and what the brothers

* Francis Tennant, of Innes.

learnt at Eton, I am surprised that we knew as much as we did and my parents' helplessness bewilders me.

My eldest brother, Eddy,* though very different from me in temperament and outlook, was the one with whom I got on best. We were both devoured by impatience and punctuality and loved being alone in the country. He hated visiting, I enjoyed it; he detested society and I delighted in it. My mother was not strong enough to take me to balls; and as she was sixty-three the year I came out, Eddy was by way of chaperoning me, but I can never remember him bringing me back from a single party. We each had our latch-keys and I went home either by myself or with a partner.

We shared a secret and passionate love for our home, Glen, and knew every clump of heather and every birch and burn in the place. Herbert Gladstone told me that, one day in India, when he and Eddy after a long day's shooting were resting in silence on the ground, he said to him:

"What are you thinking about, Eddy?"

To which he answered:

"Oh, always the same . . . Glen! . . ."

*Lord Glenconner, of Glen, Innerleithen.

In all the nine years during which he and I lived there together, in spite of our mutual irascibility of temper and uneven spirits, we never had a quarrel. Whether we joined each other on the moor at the far shepherd's cottage or waited for grouse upon the hill; whether we lunched on the Quair or fished on the Tweed, we have a thousand common memories to keep our hearts together.

My father* was a man whose vitality, irritability, energy and impressionability amounted to genius.

When he died, June 2nd, 1906, I wrote this in my diary:

"I was sitting in Elizabeth's† schoolroom at Littlestone yesterday—Whit-Monday—after hearing her recite *Tartuffe* at 7 p.m., when James gave me a telegram; it was from my stepmother:

" 'Your father passed away peacefully at five this afternoon.'

"I covered my face with my hands and went to find my husband. My father had been ill for some time, but, having had a letter from him that morning, the news gave me a shock.

"Poor little Elizabeth was terribly upset at my

*Sir Charles Tennant, 1823-1906.
†My daughter, Elizabeth Bibesco.

unhappiness; and I was moved to the heart by her saying with tear-filled eyes and a white face:

" 'Darling mother, he had a *very* happy life and is very happy now . . . he will *always* be happy.'

"This was true. . . . He had been and always will be happy, because my father's nature turned out no waste product: he had none of that useless stuff in him that lies in heaps near factories. He took his own happiness with him and was self-centred and self-sufficing: for a sociable being, the most self-sufficing I have ever known; I can think of no one of such vitality who was so independent of other people; he could golf alone, play billiards alone, walk alone, shoot alone, fish alone, do everything alone; and yet he was dependent on both my mother and my stepmother and on all occasions loved simple playfellows. . . . Some one to carry his clubs, or to wander round the garden with, would make him perfectly happy. It was at these times, I think, that my father was at his sweetest. Calm as a sky after showers, he would discuss every topic with tenderness and interest and appeared to be unupsettable; he had eternal youth, and was unaffected by a financial world which had been spinning round him all day.

"The striking thing about him was his freedom from suspicion. Thrown from his earliest days among common, shrewd men of singularly unspiritual ideals—most of them not only on the make but I might almost say on the pounce—he advanced on his own lines rapidly and courageously, not at all secretively—almost confidingly—yet he was rarely taken in.

"He knew his fellow-creatures better in the East-than in the West-end of London and had a talent for making men love him; he swept them along on the impulse of his own decided intentions. He was never too busy nor too prosperous to help the struggling and was shocked by meanness or sharp practice, however successful.

"There were some people whom my father never understood, good, generous and high-minded as he was: the fanatic with eyes turned to no known order of things filled him with electric impatience; he did not care for priests, poets or philosophers; anything like indecision, change of plans, want of order, method or punctuality, forgetfulness or carelessness—even hesitation of voice and manner—drove him mad; his temperament was like a fuse which a touch will explode, but the bomb did not kill, it

SIR CHARLES TENNANT OF GLEN: FATHER OF
MARGOT ASQUITH

hurt the uninitiated but it consumed its own sparks. My papa had no self-control, no possibility of learning it: it was an unknown science, like geometry or algebra, to him; and he had very little imagination. It was this combination—want of self-control and want of imagination—which prevented him from being a thinker.

"He had great character, minute observation, a fine memory and all his instincts were charged with almost superhuman vitality, but no one could argue with him. Had the foundation of his character been as unreasonable and unreliable as his temperament, he would have made neither friends nor money; but he was fundamentally sound, ultimately serene and high-minded in the truest sense of the word. He was a man of intellect, but not an intellectual man; he did not really know anything about the great writers or thinkers, although he had read odds and ends. He was essentially a man of action and a man of will; this is why I call him a man of intellect. He made up his mind in a flash, partly from instinct and partly from will.

"He had the courage for life and the enterprise to spend his fortune on it. He was kind and impulsively generous, but too hasty for disease to

accost or death to delay. For him they were interruptions, not abiding sorrows.

"He knew nothing of rancour, remorse, regret; they conveyed much the same to him as if he had been told to walk backwards and received neither sympathy nor courtesy from him.

"He was an artist with the gift of admiration. He had a good eye and could not buy an ugly or even moderately beautiful thing; but he was no discoverer in art. Here I will add to make myself clear that I am thinking of men like Frances Horner's father, old Mr. Graham,* who discovered and promoted Burne-Jones and Frederick Walker; or Lord Battersea, who was the first to patronise Cecil Lawson; or my sister, Lucy Graham Smith, who was a fine judge of every picture and recognised and appreciated all schools of painting. My father's judgment was warped by constantly comparing his own things with other people's.

"The pride of possession and proprietorship is a common and a human one, but the real artist makes everything he admires his own: no one can rob him of this; he sees value in unsigned pictures and promise in unfinished ones; he not only discovers

*Lady Horner, of Mells, Frome.

and interprets, but almost creates beauty by the fire of his criticisms and the inwardness of his preception. Papa was too self-centred for this; a large side of art was hidden from him; anything mysterious, suggestive, archaic, whether Italian, Spanish or Dutch, frankly bored him. His feet were planted firmly on a very healthy earth; he liked art to be a copy of nature, not of art. The modern Burne-Jones and Morris school, with what he considered its artificiality and affectations, he could not endure. He did not realise that it originated in a reaction from early- and mid-Victorianism. He lost sight of much that is beautiful in colour and fancy and all the drawing and refinement of this school, by his violent prejudices. His opinions were obsessions. Where he was original was not so much in his pictures but in the mezzotints, silver, china and *objets d'art* which he had collected for many years.

"Whatever he chose, whether it was a little owl, a dog, a nigger, a bust, a Cupid in gold, bronze, china or enamel, it had to have some human meaning, some recognisable expression which made it lovable and familiar to him. He did not care for the fantastic, the tortured or the ecclesiastical; saints, virgins, draperies and crucifixes left him

cold; but an old English chest, a stout little chair or a healthy oriental bottle would appeal to him at once.

"No one enjoyed his own possessions more naïvely and enthusiastically than my father; he would often take a candle and walk round the pictures in his dressing-gown on his way to bed, loitering over them with tenderness—I might almost say emotion.

"When I was alone with him, tucked up reading on a sofa, he would send me upstairs to look at the Sir Joshuas: Lady Gertrude Fitz-Patrick, Lady Crosbie or Miss Ridge.

" 'She is quite beautiful to-night,' he would say. 'Just run up to the drawing-room, Margot, and have a look at her.'

"It was not only his collections that he was proud of, but he was proud of his children; we could all do things better than any one else! Posie could sing, Lucy could draw, Laura could play, I could ride, etc.; our praises were stuffed down newcomers' throats till every one felt uncomfortable. I have no want of love to add to my grief at his death, but I much regret my impatience and lack of grace with him.

"He sometimes introduced me with emotional

pride to the same man or woman two or three times in one evening:

" 'This is my little girl—very clever, etc., etc. Colonel Kingscote says she goes harder across country than any one, etc., etc.'

"This exasperated me. Turning to my mother in the thick of the guests that had gathered in our house one evening to hear a professional singer, he said at the top of his voice while the lady was being conducted to the piano:

" 'Don't bother, my dear, I think every one would prefer to hear Posie sing.'

"I well remember Laura and myself being admonished by him on our returning from a party at the Cyril Flowers' in the year 1883, where we had been considerably run by dear Papa and twice introduced to Lord Granville. We showed such irritability going home in the brougham that my father said:

" 'It's no pleasure taking you girls out.'

"This was the only time I ever heard him cross with me.

"He always told us not to frown and to speak clearly, just as my mother scolded us for not holding ourselves up. I can never remember seeing him

indifferent, slack or idle in his life. He was as violent when he was dying as when he was living and quite without self-pity.

"He hated presents, but he liked praise and was easily flattered; he was too busy even for *much* of that, but he could stand more than most of us. If it is a little simple, it is also rather generous to believe in the nicest things people can say to you; and I think I would rather accept too much than repudiate and refuse: it is warmer and more enriching.

"My father had not the smallest conceit or smugness, but he had a little child-like vanity. You could not spoil him nor improve him; he remained egotistical, sound, sunny and unreasonable; violently impatient, not at all self-indulgent—despising the very idea of a valet or a secretary—but absolutely self-willed; what he intended to do, say or buy, he would do, say or buy *at once.*

"He was fond of a few people—Mark Napier,* Ribblesdale, Lord Haldane, Mr. Heseltine, Lord Rosebery and Arthur Balfour—and felt friendly to everybody, but he did not *love* many people. When we were girls he told us we ought to make

*The Hon. Mark Napier, of Ettrick.

worldly marriages, but in the end he let us choose the men we loved and gave us the material help in money which enabled us to marry them. I find exactly the opposite plan adopted by most parents: they sacrifice their children to loveless marriages as long as they know there is enough money for no demand ever to be made upon themselves.

"I think I understood my father better than the others did. I guessed his mood in a moment and in consequence could push further and say more to him when he was in a good humour. I lived with him, my mother and Eddy alone for nine years (after my sister Laura married) and had a closer personal experience of him. He liked my adventurous nature. Ribblesdale's * courtesy and sweetness delighted him and they were genuinely fond of each other. He said once to me of him:

" 'Tommy is one of the few people in the world that have shown me gratitude.' "

I cannot pass my brother-in-law's name here in my diary without some reference to the effect which he produced on us when he first came to Glen.

He was the finest-looking man that I ever saw,

* Lord Ribblesdale, of Gisburne.

except old Lord Wemyss,* the late Lord Pembroke, Mr. Wilfrid Blunt and Lord D'Abernon. He had been introduced to my sister Charty at a ball in London, when he was twenty-one and she eighteen. A brother-officer of his in the Rifle Brigade, seeing them waltzing together, asked him if she was his sister, to which he answered:

"No, thank God!"

I was twelve when he first came to Glen as Thomas Lister: his fine manners, perfect sense of humour and picturesque appearance captivated every one; and, whether you agreed with him or not, he had a perfectly original point of view and was always interested and suggestive. He never misunderstood but thoroughly appreciated my father. . . .

Continuing from my diary:

"My papa was a character-part; and some people never understood character-parts.

"None of his children are really like him; yet there are resemblances which are interesting and worth noting.

"Charty on the whole resembles him most. She

* The Earl of Wemyss and March, father of the present Earl.

"THE THREE SISTERS": FROM A PAINTING BY JOHN S. SARGENT

Daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Percy Wyndham: From left to right, Mrs. Adeane (Madeline Pamela Constance Blanche), Lady Glenconner (Pamela), The Countess of Wemyss (Mary Constance)

has his transparent simplicity, candour, courage and want of self-control; but she is the least selfish woman I know and the least self-centred. She is also more intolerant and merciless in her criticisms of other people, and has a finer sense of humour. Papa loved things of good report and never believed evil of any one. He had a rooted objection to talking lightly of other people's lives; he was not exactly reverent, but a feeling of kindly decent citizenship prevented him from thinking or speaking slightingly of other people.

"Lucy has Papa's artistic and generous side, but none of his self-confidence or decisiveness; all his physical courage, but none of his ambition.

"Eddy has his figure and deportment, his sense of justice and emotional tenderness, but none of his vitality, impulse or hope. Jack has his ambition and push, keenness and self-confidence; but he is not so good-humoured in a losing game. Frank has more of his straight tongue and appreciation of beautiful things, but none of his brains.

"I think I had more of Papa's moral indignation and daring than the others; and physically there were great resemblances between us: otherwise I do not think I am like him. I have his carriage,

balance and activity—being able to dance, skip and walk on a rope—and I have inherited his hair and sleeplessness, nerves and impatience; but intellectually we look at things from an entirely different point of view. I am more passionate, more spiritually perplexed and less self-satisfied. I have none of his powers of throwing things off. I should like to think I have a little of his generosity, humanity and kindly toleration, some of his fundamental uprightness and integrity, but when everything has been said he will remain a unique man in people's memory."

. . . . . .

Writing now, fourteen years later, I do not think that I can add much to this.

Although he was a business man, he had a wide understanding and considerable elasticity.

In connection with business men, the staggering figures published in the official White Book of November last year showed that the result of including them in the Government has been so remarkable that my memoir would be incomplete if I did not allude to them. My father and grandfather were brought up among City people and I am proud of it; but it is folly to suppose that start-

ing and developing a great business is the same as initiating and conducting a great policy, or running a big Government Department.

It has been and will remain a puzzle over which intellectual men are perpetually if not permanently groping:

"How comes it that Mr. Smith or Mr. Brown made such a vast fortune?"

The answer is not easy. Making money requires *flair,* instinct, insight or whatever you like to call it, but the qualities that go to make a business man are grotesquely unlike those which make a statesman; and, when you have pretensions to both, the result is the present comedy and confusion.

I write as the daughter of a business man and the wife of a politician and I know what I am talking about, but, in case Mr. Bonar Law—a pathetic believer in the "business man"—should honour me by reading these pages and still cling to his illusions on the subject, I refer him to the figures published in the Government White Book of 1919.

Intellectual men seldom make fortunes and business men are seldom intellectual.

My father was educated in Liverpool and worked in a night school; he was a good linguist,

which he would never have been had he had the misfortune to be educated in any of our great public schools.

I remember some one telling me how my grandfather had said that he could not understand any man of sense bringing his son up as a gentleman. In those days as in these, gentlemen were found and not made, but the expression "bringing a man up as a gentleman" meant bringing him up to be idle.

When my father gambled in the City, he took risks with his own rather than other people's money. I heard him say to a South African millionaire:

"You did not make your money out of mines, but out of mugs like me, my dear fellow!"

A whole chapter might be devoted to stories about his adventures in speculation, but I will give only one. As a young man he was put by my grandfather into a firm in Liverpool and made £30,000 on the French Bourse before he was twenty-four. On hearing of this, his father wrote and apologised to the head of the firm, saying he was willing to withdraw his son Charles if he had in any way shocked them by risking a loss which he could never have paid. The answer was a request

that the said "son Charles" should become a partner in the firm.

Born a little quicker, more punctual and more alive than other people, he suffered fools not at all. He could not modify himself in any way; he was the same man in his nursery, his school and his office, the same man in church, club, city or suburbs.

. . . . . .

My mother* was more unlike my father than can easily be imagined. She was as timid as he was bold, as controlled as he was spontaneous and as refined, courteous and unassuming as he was vibrant, sheer and adventurous.

Fond as we were of each other and intimate over all my love-affairs, my mother never really understood me; my vitality, independent happiness and physical energies filled her with fatigue. She never enjoyed her prosperity and suffered from all the

*My mother, Emma Winsloe, came of quite a different class from my father. His ancestor of earliest memory was factor to Lord Bute, whose ploughman was Robert Burns, the poet. His grandson was my grandfather Tennant of St. Rollox. My mother's family were of gentle blood. Richard Winsloe (*b.* 1770, *d.* 1842) was rector of Minster Forrabury in Cornwall and of Ruishton, near Taunton. He married Catherine Walter, daughter of the founder of the *Times*. Their son, Richard Winsloe, was sent to Oxford to study for the Church. He ran away with Charlotte Monkton, aged 17. They were caught at Evesham and brought back to be married next day at Taunton, where Admiral Monkton was living. They had two children: Emma, our mother, and Richard, my uncle.

apprehension, fussiness and love of economy that should by rights belong to the poor, but by a curious perversion almost always blight the rich.

Her preachings on economy were a constant source of amusement to my father. I made up my mind at an early age, after listening to his chaff, that money was the most overrated of all anxieties; and not only has nothing occurred in my long experience to make me alter this opinion but everything has tended to reinforce it.

In discussing matrimony my father would say:

"I'm sure I hope, girls, you'll not marry penniless men; men should not marry at all unless they can keep their wives," etc.

To this my mother would retort:

"Do not listen to your father, children! Marrying for money has never yet made any one happy; it is not blessed."

Mamma had no illusions about her children nor about anything else; her mild criticisms of the family balanced my father's obsessions. When Charty's looks were praised, she would answer with a fine smile:

"Tant soit peu mouton!"

She thought us all very plain, how plain I only

discovered by overhearing the following conversation.

I was seventeen and, a few days after my return from Dresden, I was writing behind the drawing-room screen in London, when an elderly Scotch lady came to see my mother; she was shown into the room by the footman and after shaking hands said:

"What a handsome house this is. . . ."

My Mother (*irrelevantly*): "I always think your place is so nice. Did your garden do well this year?"

Elderly Lady: "Oh, I'm not a gardener and we spend very little time at Auchnagarroch; I took Alison to the Hydro at Crieff for a change. She's just a growing girl, you know, and not at all clever like yours."

My Mother: "My girls never grow! I am sure I wish they would!"

Elderly Lady: "But they are so pretty! My Marion has a homely face!"

My Mother: "How old is she?"

Elderly Lady: "Sixteen."

My Mother: *"L'âge ingrat!* I would not trouble myself, if I were you, about her looks; with

young people one never can tell; Margot, for instance (*with a resigned sigh*), a few years ago promised to be so pretty; and just look at her now!"

When some one suggested that we should be painted it was almost more than my mother could bear. The poorness of the subject and the richness of the price shocked her profoundly. Luckily my father—who had begun to buy fine pictures—entirely agreed with her, though not for the same reasons:

"I am sure I don't know where I could hang the girls, even if I were fool enough to have them painted!" he would say.

I cannot ever remember kissing my mother without her tapping me on the back and saying, "Hold yourself up!" or kissing my father without his saying, "Don't frown!" And I shall never cease being grateful for this, as *à l'heure qu'il est* I have not a line in my forehead and my figure has not changed since my marriage.

My mother's indifference to—I might almost say suspicion of—other people always amused me:

"I am sure I don't know why they should come here! unless it is to see the garden!" Or, "I cannot help wondering what was at the back of her mind."

When I suggested that perhaps the lady she referred to had no mind, my mother would say, "I don't like people with *arrière-pensées*"; and ended most of her criticisms by saying, "It looks to me as if she had a poor circulation."

My mother had an excellent sense of humour. Doll Liddell* said: "Lucy has a touch of mild genius." And this is exactly what my mother had.

People thought her a calm, serene person, satisfied with pinching green flies off plants and incapable of deep feeling, but my mother's heart had been broken by the death of her first four children, and she dreaded emotion. Any attempt on my part to discuss old days or her own sensations was resolutely discouraged. There was a lot of fun and affection but a tepid intimacy between us, except about my flirtations; and over these we saw eye to eye.

My mother, who had been a great flirt herself, thoroughly enjoyed all love-affairs and was absolutely unshockable. Little words of wisdom would drop from her mouth:

My Mother: "Men don't like being run after. . . ."

* The late A. G. C. Liddell.

MARGOT: "Oh, don't you believe it, mamma!"

MY MOTHER: "You can do what you like in life if you can hold your tongue, but the world is relentless to people who are found out."

She told my father that if he interfered with my love-affairs I should very likely marry a groom.

She did me a good turn here, for, though I would not have married a groom, I might have married the wrong man and, in any case, interference would have been cramping to me.

I have copied out of my diary what I wrote about my mother when she died.

"January 21st, 1895.

"Mamma is dead. She died this morning and Glen isn't my home any more: I feel as if I should be 'received' here in future, instead of finding my own darling, tender little mother, who wanted arranging for and caring for and to whom my gossipy trivialities were precious and all my love-stories a trust. How I *wish* I could say sincerely that I had understood her nature and sympathised with her and never felt hurt by anything she could say and had *eagerly* shown my love and sought hers. . . . Lucky Lucy! She *can* say this, but I do not think that I can.

"Mamma's life and death have taught me several things. Her sincerity and absence of vanity and worldliness were her really striking qualities. Her power of suffering passively, without letting any one into her secret, was carried to a fault. We who longed to share some part, however small, of the burden of her emotion were not allowed to do so. This reserve to the last hour of her life remained her inexorable rule and habit. It arose from a wish to spare other people and fear of herself and her own feelings. To spare others was her ideal. Another characteristic was her pity for the obscure, the dull and the poor. The postman in winter ought to have fur-lined gloves; and we must send our Christmas letters and parcels before or after the busy days. Lord Napier's* coachman had never seen a comet; she would write and tell him what day it was prophesied. The lame girl at the lodge must be picked up in the brougham and taken for a drive, etc. . . .

"She despised any one who was afraid of infection and was singularly ignorant on questions of health; she knew little or nothing of medicine and never believed in doctors; she made an exception of

*Lord Napier and Ettrick, father of Mark Napier.

Sir James Simpson, who was her friend. She told me that he had said there was a great deal of nonsense talked about health and diet:

"'If the fire is low, it does not matter whether you stir it with the poker or the tongs.'

"She believed firmly in cold water and thought that most illnesses came from 'checked perspiration.'

"She loved happy people—people with courage and go and what she called 'nature'—and said many good things. Of Mark Napier: 'He had so much nature, I am sure he had a Neapolitan wet-nurse' (here she was right). Of Charty: 'She has so much social courage.' Of Aunt Marion*: 'She is unfortunately inferior.' Of Lucy's early friends: 'Lucy's trumpery girls.'

"Mamma was not at all spiritual, nor had she much intellectual imagination, but she believed firmly in God and was profoundly sorry for those who did not. She was full of admiration for religious people. Laura's prayer against high spirits she thought so wonderful that she kept it in a book near her bed.

"She told me she had never had enough circula-

*My father's sister, Mrs. Wallace.

tion to have good spirits herself and that her old nurse often said:

" 'No one should ever be surprised at anything they feel.'

"My mamma came of an unintellectual family and belonged to a generation in which it was not the fashion to read. She had lived in a small *milieu* most of her life, without the opportunity of meeting distinguished people. She had great powers of observation and a certain delicate acuteness of expression which identified all she said with herself. She was *fine-mouche* and full of tender humour, a woman of the world, but entirely bereft of worldliness.

"Her twelve children, who took up all her time, accounted for some of her *à quoi bon* attitude towards life, but she had little or no concentration and a feminine mind both in its purity and inconsequence.

"My mother hardly had one intimate friend and never allowed any one to feel necessary to her. Most people thought her gentle to docility and full of quiet composure. So much is this the general impression that, out of nearly a hundred letters which I received, there is not one that does not

allude to her restful nature. As a matter of fact, Mamma was one of the most restless creatures that ever lived. She moved from room to room, table to table, and topic to topic, not, it is true, with haste or fretfulness, but with no concentration of either thought or purpose; and I never saw her put up her feet in my life.

"Her want of confidence in herself and of grip upon life prevented her from having the influence which her experience of the world and real insight might have given her; and her want of expansion prevented her own generation and discouraged ours from approaching her closely.

"Few women have speculative minds nor can they deliberate: they have instincts, quick apprehensions and powers of observation; but they are seldom imaginative and neither their logic nor their reason are their strong points. Mamma was in all these ways like the rest of her sex.

"She had much affection for, but hardly any pride in her children. Laura's genius was a phrase to her; and any praise of Charty's looks or Lucy's successes she took as mere courtesy on the part of the speaker. I can never remember her praising me, except to say that I had social courage, nor did

she ever encourage me to draw, write or play the piano.

"She marked in a French translation of *The Imitation of Christ* which Lucy gave her:

"*'Certes au jour du jugement on ne nous demandera point ce que nous avons lu, mais ce que nous avons fait; ni si nous avons bien parlé mais si nous avons bien vécu.'*

"She was the least self-centred and self-scanned of human beings, unworldly and uncomplaining. As Doll Liddell says in his admirable letter to me, 'She was often wise and always gracious.' "

CHAPTER II

GLEN AMONG THE MOORS—MARGOT'S ADVENTURE WITH A TRAMP—THE SHEPHERD BOY—MEMORIES AND ESCAPADES—LAURA AND MARGOT; PROPOSALS OF MARRIAGE—NEW MEN FRIENDS—LAURA ENGAGED; PROPOSAL IN THE DUSK—MARGOT'S ACCIDENT IN HUNTING FIELD—LAURA'S PREMONITION OF DEATH IN CHILD-BIRTH—LAURA'S WILL

MY home, Glen, is on the border of Peebles-shire and Selkirkshire, sixteen miles from Abbotsford and thirty from Edinburgh. It was designed on the lines of Glamis and Castle Fraser, in what is called Scottish baronial style. I well remember the first shock I had when some one said:

"I hate turrets and tin men on the top of them!"

It unsettled me for days. I had never imagined that anything could be more beautiful than Glen. The classical style of Whittingehame—and other fine places of the sort—appeared to me better suited for municipal buildings; the beams and flint in Cheshire reminded me of Earl's Court; and such

GLEN: HOME OF THE TENNANTS AMONG THE SCOTTISH MOORS, WHERE MARGOT WAS BORN

castles as I had seen looked like the pictures of the Rhine on my blotting-book. I was quite ignorant and "Scottish baronial" thrilled me.

What made Glen really unique was not its architecture but its situation. The road by which you approached it was a *cul-de-sac* and led to nothing but moors. This—and the fact of its being ten miles from a railway station—gave it security in its wildness. Great stretches of heather swept down to the garden walls; and, however many heights you climbed, moor upon moor rose in front of you.

Evan Charteris* said that my hair was biography: as it is my only claim to beauty, I would like to think that this is true, but the hills at Glen are my real biography.

Nature inoculates its lovers from its own culture; sea, downs and moors produce a different type of person. Shepherds, fishermen and poachers are a little like what they contemplate and, were it possible to ask the towns to tell us whom they find most untamable, I have not a doubt that they would say, those who are born on the moors.

I married late—at the age of thirty—and spent

*The Hon. Evan Charteris.

all my early life at Glen. I was a child of the heather and quite untamable. After my sister Laura Lyttelton died, my brother Eddy and I lived alone with my parents for nine years at Glen.

When he was abroad shooting big game, I spent long days out of doors, seldom coming in for lunch. Both my pony and my hack were saddled from 7 a.m., ready for me to ride, every day of my life. I wore the shortest of tweed skirts, knickerbockers of the same stuff, top-boots, a covert-coat and a coloured scarf round my head. I was equipped with a book, pencils, cigarettes and food. Every shepherd and poacher knew me; and I have often shared my "piece" with them, sitting in the heather near the red burns, or sheltered from rain in the cuts and quarries of the open road.

After my first great sorrow—the death of my sister Laura—I was suffocated in the house and felt I had to be out of doors from morning till night.

One day I saw an old shepherd called Gowanlock coming up to me, holding my pony by the rein. I had never noticed that it had strayed away and, after thanking him, I observed him looking at me quietly—he knew something of the rage and an-

guish that Laura's death had brought into my heart —and putting his hand on my shoulder, he said:

"My child, there's no contending. . . . Ay—ay"—shaking his beautiful old head—*"that is so,* there's no contending. . . ."

Another day, when it came on to rain, I saw a tramp crouching under the dyke, holding an umbrella over his head and eating his lunch. I went and sat down beside him and we fell into desultory conversation. He had a grand, wild face and I felt some curiosity about him; but he was taciturn and all he told me was that he was walking to the Gordon Arms, on his way to St. Mary's Loch. I asked him every sort of question—as to where he had come from, where he was going to and what he wanted to do—but he refused to gratify my curiosity, so I gave him one of my cigarettes and a light and we sat peacefully smoking together in silence. When the rain cleared, I turned to him and said:

"You seem to walk all day and go nowhere; when you wake up in the morning, how do you shape your course?"

To which he answered:

"I always turn my back to the wind."

Border people are more intelligent than those

born in the South; and the people of my birthplace are a hundred years in advance of the Southern English even now.

When I was fourteen, I met a shepherd-boy reading a French book. It was called *Le Secret de Delphine.* I asked him how he came to know French and he told me it was the extra subject he had been allowed to choose for studying in his holidays; he walked eighteen miles a day to school—nine there and nine back—taking his chance of a lift from any passing vehicle. I begged him to read out loud to me, but he was shy of his accent and would not do it. The Lowland Scotch were a wonderful people in my day.

. . . . . .

I remember nothing unhappy in my glorious youth except the violence of our family quarrels. Reckless waves of high and low spirits, added to quick tempers, obliged my mother to separate us for some time and forbid us to sleep in the same bedroom. We raged and ragged till the small hours of the morning, which kept us thin and the household awake.

My mother told me two stories of myself as a little child:

"When you were sent for to come downstairs, Margot, the nurse opened the door and you walked in—generally alone—saying, 'Here's me! . . .'"

This rather sanguine opening does not seem to have been sufficiently checked. She went on to say:

"I was dreadfully afraid you would be upset and ill when I took you one day to the Deaf and Dumb Asylum in Glasgow, as you felt things with passionate intensity. Before starting I lifted you on to my knee and said, 'You know, darling, I am going to take you to see some poor people who cannot speak.' At which you put your arms round my neck and said, with consoling emphasis, '*I* will soon make them speak!'"

The earliest event I can remember was the arrival of the new baby, my brother Jack, when I was two years old. Dr. Cox was spoiling my mother's good-night visit while I was being dried after my bath. My pink flannel dressing-gown, with white buttonhole stitching, was hanging over the fender; and he was discussing some earnest subject in a low tone. He got up and, pinching my chin said:

"She will be very angry, but we will give her a baby of her own," or words to that effect.

The next day a huge doll obliterated from my mind the new baby which had arrived that morning.

We were left very much alone in our nursery, as my mother travelled from pillar to post, hunting for health for her child Pauline. Our nurse, Mrs. Hills—called "Missuls" for short—left us on my tenth birthday to become my sister's lady's-maid, and this removed our first and last restriction.

We were wild children and, left to ourselves, had the time of our lives. I rode my pony up the front stairs and tried to teach my father's high-stepping barouche-horses to jump—crashing their knees into the hurdles in the field—and climbed our incredibly dangerous roof, sitting on the sweep's ladder by moonlight in my nightgown. I had scrambled up every tree, walked on every wall and knew every turret at Glen. I ran along the narrow ledges of the slates in rubber shoes at terrific heights. This alarmed other people so much that my father sent for me one day to see him in his "business room" and made me swear before God that I would give

up walking on the roof; and give it up I did, with many tears.

Laura and I were fond of acting and dressing up. We played at being found in dangerous and adventurous circumstances in the garden. One day the boys were rabbit-shooting and we were acting with the doctor's daughter. I had spoilt the game by running round the kitchen-garden wall instead of being discovered—as I was meant to be—in a Turkish turban, smoking on the banks of the Bosphorus. Seeing that things were going badly and that the others had disappeared, I took a wild jump into the radishes. On landing I observed a strange gentleman coming up the path. He looked at my torn gingham frock, naked legs, tennis shoes and dishevelled curls under an orange turban; and I stood still and gazed at him.

"This is a wonderful place," he said; to which I replied:

"You like it?"

He: "I would like to see the house. I hear there are beautiful things in it."

Margot: "I think the drawing-rooms are all shut up."

He: "How do you know? Surely you could

manage to get hold of a servant or some one who would take me round. Do you know any of them?"

I asked him if he meant the family or the servants.

"The family," he said.

MARGOT: "I know them very well, but I don't know you."

"I am an artist," said the stranger; "my name is Peter Graham. Who are you?"

"I am an artist too!" I said. "My name is Margot Tennant. I suppose you thought I was the gardener's daughter, did you?"

He gave a circulating smile, finishing on my turban, and said:

"To tell you the honest truth, I had no idea what you were!"

My earliest sorrow was when I was stealing peaches in the conservatory and my little dog was caught in a trap set for rats. He was badly hurt before I could squeeze under the glass slides to save him. I was betrayed by my screams for help and caught in the peach-house by the gardener. I was punished and put to bed, as the large peaches were to have been shown in Edinburgh and I had eaten five.

We had a dancing-class at the minister's and an arithmetic-class in our schoolroom. I was as good at the Manse as I was bad at my sums; and poor Mr. Menzies, the Traquair schoolmaster, had eventually to beg my mother to withdraw me from the class, as I kept them all back. To my delight I was withdrawn; and from that day to this I have never added a single row of figures.

I showed a remarkable proficiency in dancing and could lift both my feet to the level of my eyebrows with disconcerting ease. Mrs. Wallace, the minister's wife, was shocked and said:

"Look at Margot with her Frenchified airs!"

I pondered often and long over this, the first remark about myself that I can ever remember. Some one said to me:

"Does your hair curl naturally?"

To which I replied:

"I don't know, but I will ask."

I was unaware of myself and had not the slightest idea what "curling naturally" meant.

We had two best dresses: one made in London, which we only wore on great occasions; the other made by my nurse, in which we went down to dessert. These dresses gave me my first impression

of civilised life. Just as the Speaker, before clearing the House, spies strangers, so, when I saw my black velvet skirt and pink Garibaldi put out on the bed, I knew that something was up! The nursery confection was of white alpaca, piped with pink, and did not inspire the same excitement and confidence.

We saw little of our mother in our youth and I asked Laura one day if she thought she said her prayers; I would not have remembered this had it not been that Laura was profoundly shocked. The question was quite uncalled for and had no ulterior motive, but I never remembered my mother or any one else talking to us about the Bible or hearing us our prayers. Nevertheless we were all deeply religious, by which no one need infer that we were good. There was one service a week, held on Sundays, in Traquair Kirk, which every one went to; and the shepherds' dogs kept close to their masters' plaids, hung over the high box-pews, all the way down the aisle. I have heard many fine sermons in Scotland, but our minister was not a good preacher; and we were often dissolved in laughter, sitting in the square family pew in the gallery. My father

closed his eyes tightly all through the sermon, leaning his head on his hand.

The Scottish Sabbath still held its own in my youth; and when I heard that Ribblesdale and Charty played lawn tennis on Sunday after they were married, I felt very unhappy. We had a few Sabbath amusements, but they were not as entertaining as those described in Miss Fowler's book, in which the men who were heathens went into one corner of the room and the women who were Christians into the other and, at the beating of a gong, conversion was accomplished by a close embrace. Our Scottish Sabbaths were very different, and I thought them more than dreary. Although I love church music and architecture and can listen to almost any sermon at any time and even read sermons to myself, going to church in the country remains a sacrifice to me. The painful custom in the Church of England of reading indistinctly and in an assumed voice has alienated simple people in every parish; and the average preaching is painful. In my country you can still hear a good sermon. When staying with Lord Haldane's mother—the most beautiful, humorous and saintly of old ladies—I heard an excellent

sermon at Auchterarder on this very subject, the dullness of Sundays. The minister said that, however brightly the sun shone on stained glass windows, no one could guess what they were really like from the outside; it was from the inside only that you should judge of them.

Another time I heard a man end his sermon by saying:

"And now, my friends, do your duty and don't look upon the world with eyes jaundiced by religion."

My mother hardly ever mentioned religion to us and, when the subject was brought up by other people, she confined her remarks to saying in a weary voice and with a resigned sigh that God's ways were mysterious. She had suffered many sorrows and, in estimating her lack of temperament, I do not think I made enough allowance for them. No true woman ever gets over the loss of a child; and her three eldest had died before I was born.

I was the most vital of the family and what the nurses described as a "venturesome child." Our coachman's wife called me "a little Turk." Self-

willed, excessively passionate, painfully truthful, bold as well as fearless and always against convention, I was, no doubt, extremely difficult to bring up.

My mother was not lucky with her governesses—we had two at a time, and of every nationality, French, German, Swiss, Italian and Greek—but, whether through my fault or our governesses', I never succeeded in making one of them really love me. Mary Morison,* who kept a high school for young ladies in Innerleithen, was the first person who influenced me and my sister Laura. She is alive now and a woman of rare intellect and character. She was fonder of Laura than of me, but so were most people.

Here I would like to say something about my sister and Alfred Lyttelton, whom she married in 1885.

A great deal of nonsense has been written and talked about Laura. There are two printed accounts of her that are true: one has been written by the present Mrs. Alfred Lyttelton, in generous and tender passages in the life of her husband, and the

*Miss Morison, a cousin of Mr. William Archer's.

other by A. G. C. Liddell; but even these do not quite give the brilliant, witty Laura of my heart.

I will quote what my dear friend, Doll Liddell, wrote of her in his *Notes from the Life of an Ordinary Mortal:*

My acquaintance with Miss Tennant, which led to a close intimacy with herself, and afterwards with her family, was an event of such importance in my life that I feel I ought to attempt some description of her. This is not an easy task, as a more indescribable person never existed, for no one could form a correct idea of what she was like who had not had opportunities of feeling her personal charm. Her looks were certainly not striking at first sight, though to most persons who had known her some weeks she would often seem almost beautiful. To describe her features would give no idea of the brightness and vivacity of her expression, or of that mixture of innocence and mischief, as of a half-child, half-Kelpie, which distinguished her. Her figure was very small but well made, and she was always prettily and daintily dressed. If the outward woman is difficult to describe, what can be said of her character?

To begin with her lighter side, she had reduced fascination to a fine art in a style entirely her own. I have never known her meet any man, and hardly any woman, whom she could not subjugate in a few days. It is as difficult to give any idea of her methods as to describe a dance when the music is un-

heard. Perhaps one may say that her special characteristic was the way in which she combined the gaiety of a child with the tact and aplomb of a grown woman. . . . Her victims, after their period of enchantment, generally became her devoted friends.

This trifling was, however, only the ripple on the surface. In the deeper parts of her nature was a fund of earnestness and a sympathy which enabled her to throw herself into the lives of other people in a quite unusual way, and was one of the great secrets of the general affection she inspired. It was not, however, as is sometimes the case with such feelings, merely emotional, but impelled her to many kindnesses and to constant, though perhaps somewhat impulsive, efforts to help her fellows of all sorts and conditions.

On her mental side she certainly gave the impression, from the originality of her letters and sayings, and her appreciation of what was best in literature, that her gifts were of a high order. In addition, she had a subtle humour and readiness, which made her repartees often delightful and produced phrases and fancies of characteristic daintiness. But there was something more than all this, an extra dose of life, which caused a kind of electricity to flash about her wherever she went, lighting up all with whom she came in contact. I am aware that this description will seem exaggerated, and will be put down to the writer having dwelt in her "Ææan isle" but I think that if it should meet the eyes of any who knew her in her short life, they will understand what it attempts to convey.

This is good, but his poem is even better; and there is a prophetic touch in the line, "Shadowed with something of the future years."

A face upturned towards the midnight sky,
Pale in the glimmer of the pale starlight,
And all around the black and boundless night,
And voices of the winds which bode and cry.
A childish face, but grave with curves that lie
  Ready to breathe in laughter or in tears,
  Shadowed with something of the future years
That makes one sorrowful, I know not why.
O still, small face, like a white petal torn
  From a wild rose by autumn winds and flung
  On some dark stream the hurrying waves among:
By what strange fates and whither art thou borne?

Laura had many poems written to her from many lovers. My daughter Elizabeth Bibesco's godfather, Godfrey Webb—a conspicuous member of the Souls, not long since dead—wrote this of her:

"HALF CHILD, HALF WOMAN."

Tennyson's description of Laura in 1883:

"Half child, half woman"—wholly to be loved
By either name she found an easy way
Into my heart, whose sentinels all proved
Unfaithful to their trust, the luckless day
She entered there. "Prudence and reason both!

Did you not question her? How was it pray
She so persuaded you?" "Nor sleep nor sloth,"
They cried, "o'ercame us then, a *child* at play
Went smiling past us, and then turning round
Too late your heart to save, a woman's face we found."

Laura was not a plaster saint; she was a generous, clamative, combative little creature of genius, full of humour, imagination, temperament and impulse.

Some one reading this memoir will perhaps say: "I wonder what Laura and Margot were really like, what the differences and what the resemblances between them were."

The men who could answer this question best would be Lord Gladstone, Arthur Balfour, Lord Midleton, Sir Rennell Rodd, or Lord Curzon (of Kedleston). I can only say what I think the differences and resemblances were.

Strictly speaking, I was better-looking than Laura, but she had rarer and more beautiful eyes. Brains are such a small part of people that I cannot judge of them as between her and me; and, at the age of twenty-three, when she died, few of us are at the height of our powers, but Laura made and left a deeper impression on the world in her

short life than any one that I have ever known. What she really had to a greater degree than other people was true spirituality, a feeling of intimacy with the other world and a sense of the love and wisdom of God and His plan of life. Her mind was informed by true religion; and her heart was fixed. This did not prevent her from being a very great flirt. The first time that a man came to Glen and liked me better than Laura, she was immensely surprised—not more so than I was—and had it not been for the passionate love which we cherished for each other, there must inevitably have been much jealousy between us.

On several occasions the same man proposed to both of us, and we had to find out from each other what our intentions were.

I only remember being hurt by Laura on one occasion and it came about in this way. We were always dressed alike, and as we were the same size; "M" and "L" had to be written in our clothes as we grew older.

One day, about the time of which I am writing, I was thirteen; I took a letter out of the pocket of what I thought was my skirt and read it; it was from Laura to my eldest sister Posie and, though

I do not remember it all, one sentence was burnt into me:

"Does it not seem extraordinary that Margot should be teaching a Sunday class?"

I wondered why any one should think it extraordinary! I went upstairs and cried in a small black cupboard, where I generally disappeared when life seemed too much for me.

The Sunday class I taught need have disturbed no one, for I regret to relate that, after a striking lesson on the birth of Christ, when I asked my pupils who the Virgin was, one of the most promising said:

"Queen Victoria!"

The idea had evidently gone abroad that I was a frivolous character; this hurt and surprised me. Naughtiness and frivolity are different, and I was always deeply in earnest.

Laura was more gentle than I was; and her goodness resolved itself into greater activity.

She and I belonged to a reading-class. I read more than she did and at greater speed, but we were all readers and profited by a climate which kept us indoors and a fine library. The class obliged us to read an hour a day, which could not be

called excessive, but the real test was doing the same thing at the same time. I would have preferred three or four hours' reading on wet days and none on fine, but not so our Edinburgh tutor.

Laura started the Girls' Friendly Society in the village, which was at that time famous for its drunkenness and immorality. We drove ourselves to the meetings in a high two-wheeled dog-cart behind a fast trotter, coming back late in pitch darkness along icy roads. These drives to Innerleithen and our moonlight talks are among my most precious recollections.

At the meetings—after reading aloud to the girls while they sewed and knitted—Laura would address them. She gave a sort of lesson, moral, social and religious, and they all adored her. More remarkable at her age than speaking to mill-girls were her Sunday classes at Glen, in the housekeeper's room. I do not know one girl now of any age—Laura was only sixteen—who could talk on religious subjects with profit to the butler, housekeeper and maids, or to any grown-up people, on a Sunday afternoon.

Compared with what the young men have written and published during this war, Laura's literary

promise was not great; both her prose and her poetry were less remarkable than her conversation.

She was not so good a judge of character as I was and took many a goose for a swan, but, in consequence of this, she made people of both sexes—and even all ages—twice as good, clever and delightful as they would otherwise have been.

I have never succeeded in making any one the least different from what they are and, in my efforts to do so, have lost every female friend that I have ever had (with the exception of four). This was the true difference between us. I have never influenced anybody but my own two children, Elizabeth and Anthony, but Laura had such an amazing effect upon men and women that for years after she died they told me that she had both changed and made their lives. This is a tremendous saying. When I die, people may turn up and try to make the world believe that I have influenced them and women may come forward whom I adored and who have quarrelled with me and pretend that they always loved me, but I wish to put it on record that they did not, or, if they did, their love is not my kind of love and I have no use for it.

The fact is that I am not touchy or impenitent

myself and forget that others may be and I tell people the truth about themselves, while Laura made them feel it. I do not think I should mind hearing from any one the naked truth about myself; and on the few occasions when it has happened to me, I have not been in the least offended. My chief complaint is that so few love one enough, as one grows older, to say what they really think; nevertheless I have often wished that I had been born with Laura's skill and tact in dealing with men and women. In her short life she influenced more people than I have done in over twice as many years. I have never influenced people even enough to make them change their stockings! And I have never succeeded in persuading any young persons under my charge—except my own two children—to say that they were wrong or sorry, nor at this time of life do I expect to do so.

There was another difference between Laura and me: she felt sad when she refused the men who proposed to her; I pitied no man who loved me. I told Laura that both her lovers and mine had a very good chance of getting over it, as they invariably declared themselves too soon. We were neither of us *au fond* very susceptible. It was the

custom of the house that men should be in love with us, but I can truly say that we gave quite as much as we received.

I said to Rowley Leigh*—a friend of my brother Eddy's and one of the first gentlemen that ever came to Glen—when he begged me to go for a walk with him:

"Certainly, if you won't ask me to marry you."

To which he replied:

"I never thought of it!"

"That's all right!" said I, putting my arm confidingly and gratefully through his.

He told me afterwards that he had been making up his mind and changing it for days as to how he should propose.

Sir David Tennant, a former Speaker at Cape Town and the most distant of cousins, came to stay at Glen with his son, a young man of twenty. After a few days, the young man took me into one of the conservatories and asked me to marry him. I pointed out that I hardly knew him by sight, and that "he was running hares." He took it extremely well and, much elated, I returned to the house to tell Laura. I found her in tears; she told me Sir

*The Hon. Rowland Leigh, of Stoneleigh Abbey.

David Tennant had asked her to marry him and she had been obliged to refuse. I cheered her up by pointing out that it would have been awkward had we both accepted, for, while remaining my sister, she would have become my mother-in-law and my husband's stepmother.

We were not popular in Peeblesshire, partly because we had no county connection, but chiefly because we were Liberals. My father had turned out the sitting Tory, Sir Graham Montgomery, of Stobo, and was member for the two counties Peeblesshire and Selkirkshire. As Sir Graham had represented the counties for thirty years, this was resented by the Montgomery family, who proceeded to cut us. Laura was much worried over this, but I was amused. I said the love of the Maxwell Stuarts, Maxwell Scotts, Wolfe Murrays and Sir Thomas—now Lord—Carmichael was quite enough for me and that if she liked she could twist Sir Graham Montgomery round her little finger; as a matter of fact, neither Sir Graham nor his sons disliked us. I met Basil Montgomery at Traquair House many years after my papa's election, where we were entertained by Herbert Maxwell—the owner of one of the most romantic houses in Scot-

I drew this of (Maria) Lady Aylesbury at Althorp March 1891.

DRAWING BY MARGOT TENNANT REFERRED TO IN ACCOUNT OF AMUSEMENTS AT GLEN, ON PAGE 74.

land, and our most courteous and affectionate neighbour. Not knowing who he was, I was indignant when he told me he thought Peeblesshire was dull; I said where we lived it was far from dull and asked him if he knew many people in the county. To which he answered:

"Chiefly the Stobo lot."

At this I showed him the most lively sympathy and invited him to come to Glen. In consequence of this visit he told me years afterwards his fortune had been made. My father took a fancy to him and at my request employed him on the Stock Exchange.

Laura and I shared the night nursery together till she married; and, in spite of mixed proposals, we were devoted friends. We read late in bed, sometimes till three in the morning, and said our prayers out loud to each other every night. We were discussing imagination one night and were comparing Hawthorne, De Quincey, Poe and others, in consequence of a dispute arising out of one of our pencil-games; and we argued till the housemaid came in with the hot water at eight in the morning.

I will digress here to explain our after-dinner

games. There were several, but the best were what Laura and I invented: one was called "Styles," another "Clumps"—better known as "Animal, Vegetable or Mineral"—a third, "Epigrams" and the most dangerous of all "Character Sketches." We were given no time-limit, but sat feverishly silent in different corners of the room, writing as hard as we could. When it was agreed that we had all written enough, the manuscripts were given to our umpire, who read them out loud. Votes were then taken as to the authorship, which led to first-rate general conversation on books, people and manner of writing. We have many interesting umpires, beginning with Bret Harte and Laurence Oliphant and going on to Arthur Balfour, George Curzon, George Wyndham, Lionel Tennyson,* Harry Cust and Doll Liddell: all good writers themselves.

Some of our guests preferred making caricatures to competing in the more ambitious line of literature. I made a drawing of the Dowager Countess of Aylesbury, better known as "Lady A."; Colonel Saunderson—a famous Orangeman—did a sketch of Gladstone for me; while Alma

*Brother of the present Lord Tennyson.

Portrait of The Queen
in four lines by Sir
Alma Tadema R.A.
1890

PORTRAIT OF QUEEN VICTORIA IN FOUR LINES; REFERRED TO ON PAGE 77.

Tadema gave me one of Queen Victoria, done in four lines.

These games were good for our tempers and a fine training; any loose vanity, jealousy, or over-competitiveness were certain to be shown up; and those who took the buttons off the foils in the duel of argument—of which I have seen a good deal in my life—were instantly found out. We played all our games with much greater precision and care than they are played now and from practice became extremely good at them. I never saw a playing-card at Glen till after I married, though—when we were obliged to dine downstairs to prevent the company being thirteen at dinner—I vaguely remember a back view of my grandpapa at the card-table playing whist.

Laura was a year and a half older than I was and came out in 1881, while I was in Dresden. The first party that she and I went to together was a political crush given by Sir William and Lady Harcourt. I was introduced to Spencer Lyttleton and shortly after this Laura met his brother Alfred.

One day, as she and I were leaving St. Paul's Cathedral, she pointed out a young man to me and said:

"Go and ask Alfred Lyttelton to come to Glen any time this autumn," which I promptly did.

The advent of Alfred into our family coincided with that of several new men, the Charterises, Balfours, George Curzon, George Wyndham, Harry Cust, the Crawleys, Jack Pease, "Harry" Paulton, Lord Houghton, Mark Napier, Doll Liddell and others. High hopes had been entertained by my father that some of these young men might marry us, but after the reception we gave to Lord Lymington—who, to do him justice, never proposed to any of us except in the paternal imagination—his nerve was shattered and we were left to ourselves.

Some weeks before Alfred's arrival, Laura had been much disturbed by hearing that we were considered "fast"; she told me that receiving men at midnight in our bedroom shocked people and that we ought, perhaps, to give it up. I listened closely to what she had to say, and at the end remarked that it appeared to me to be quite absurd. Godfrey Webb agreed with me and said that people who were easily shocked were like women who sell stale pastry in cathedral towns; and he advised us to take no notice whatever of what any one said. We

MRS. ASQUITH'S MOTHER

hardly knew the meaning of the word "fast" and, as my mother went to bed punctually at eleven, it was unthinkable that men and women friends should not be allowed to join us. Our bedroom had been converted by me out of the night-nursery into a sitting-room. The shutters were removed and book-shelves put in their place, an idea afterwards copied by my friends. The Morris carpet and chintzes I had discovered for myself and chosen in London; and my walls were ornamented with curious objects, varying from caricatures and crucifixes to prints of prize-fights, fox-hunts, Virgins and Wagner. In one of the turrets I hung my clothes; in the other I put an altar on which I kept my books of prayer and a skull which was given to me by the shepherd's son and which is on my book-shelf now; we wore charming dressing-jackets and sat up in bed with coloured cushions behind our backs, while the brothers and their friends sat on the floor or in comfortable chairs round the room. On these occasions the gas was turned low, a brilliant fire made up and either a guest or one of us would read by the light of a single candle, tell ghost-stories or discuss current affairs: politics, people and books. Not only the young, but the old

men came to our gatherings. I remember Jowett reading out aloud to us Thomas Hill Green's lay sermons; and when he had finished I asked him how much he had loved Green, to which he replied:

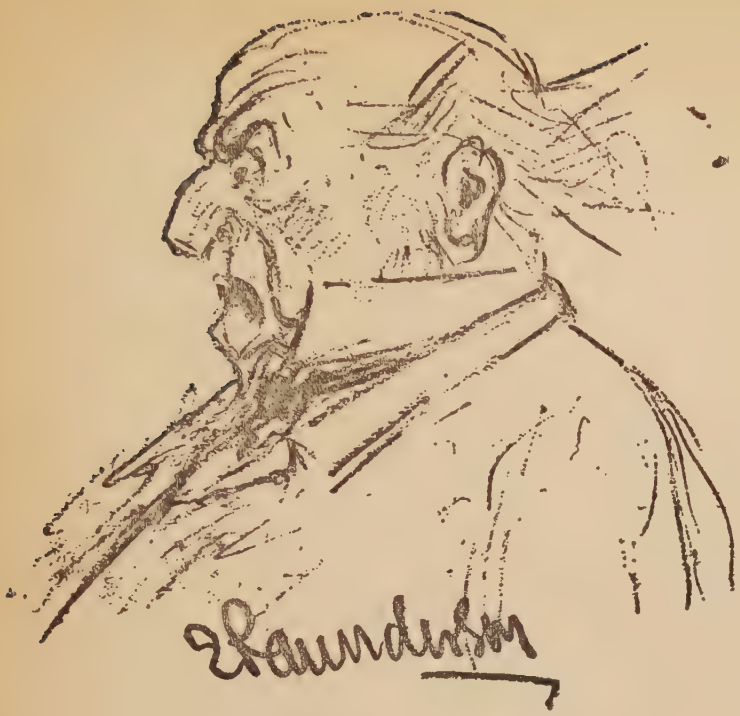
"I did not love him at all."

That these midnight meetings should shock any one appeared fantastic; and as most people in the house agreed with me, they were continued.

It was not this alone that disturbed Laura; she wanted to marry a serious, manly fellow, but as she was a great flirt, other types of a more brilliant kind obscured this vision and she had become profoundly undecided over her own love-affairs; they had worked so much upon her nerves that when Mr. Lyttelton came to Glen she was in bed with acute neuralgia and unable to see him.

My father welcomed Alfred warmly, for, apart from his charming personality, he was Gladstone's nephew and had been brought up in the Liberal creed.

On the evening of his arrival, we all went out after dinner. There had been a terrific gale which had destroyed half a wood on a hill in front of the library windows and we wanted to see the roots of the trees blown up by dynamite. It was a moon-



DRAWING OF W. E. GLADSTONE BY HIS FAMOUS IRISH POLITICAL OPPONENT, COLONEL SANDERSON; REFERRED TO ON PAGE 74.

light night, but the moon is always brighter in novels than in life and it was pitch dark. Alfred and I, walking arm in arm, talked gaily to each other as we stumbled over the broken brushwood by the side of the Quair burn. As we approached the wood a white birch lay across the water at a slanting angle and I could not resist leaving Alfred's side to walk across it. It was, however, too slippery for me and I fell. Alfred plunged into the burn and scrambled me out. I landed on my feet and, except for sopping stockings, no harm was done. Our party had scattered in the dark and, as it was past midnight, we walked back to the house alone. When we returned, we found everybody had gone to their rooms and Alfred suggested carrying me up to bed. As I weighed under eight stone, he lifted me up like a toy and deposited me on my bed. Kneeling down, he kissed my hand and said good night to me.

Two days after this my brother Eddy and I travelled North for the Highland meeting. Laura, who had been gradually recovering, was well enough to leave her room that day; and I need hardly say that this had the immediate effect of prolonging Alfred's visit.

On my return to Glen ten days later she told me she had made up her mind to marry Alfred Lyttleton.

. . . . . .

After what Mrs. Lyttelton has written of her husband, there is little to add, but I must say one word of my brother-in-law as he appeared to me in those early days.

Alfred Lyttelton was a vital, splendid young man of fervent nature, even more spoilt than we were. He was as cool and as fundamentally unsusceptible as he was responsive and emotional. Every one adored him; he combined the prowess at games of a Greek athlete with moral right-mindedness of a high order. He was neither a gambler nor an artist. He respected discipline, but loathed asceticism.

What interested me most in him was not his mind—which lacked elasticity—but his religion, his unquestioning obedience to the will of God and his perfect freedom from cant. His mentality was brittle and he was as quick-tempered in argument as he was sunny and serene in games. There are people who thought Alfred was a man of strong physical passions, wrestling with temptation till he

had achieved complete self-mastery, but nothing was farther from the truth. In him you found combined an ardent nature, a cool temperament and a peppery intellectual temper. Alfred would have been justified in taking out a patent in himself as an Englishman, warranted like a dye never to lose colour. To him most foreigners were frogs. In Edward Lyttelton's admirable monograph of his brother, you will read that one day, when Alfred was in the train, sucking an orange, "a small, grubby Italian, leaning on his walking-stick, smoking a cheroot at the station," was looked upon, not only by Alfred but by his biographer, as an "irresistible challenge to fling the juicy, but substantial, fragment full at the unsuspecting foreigner's cheek." At this we are told that "Alfred collapsed into noble convulsions of laughter." I quote this incident, as it illustrates the difference between the Tennant and the Lyttelton sense of humour. Their laughter was a tornado or convulsion to which they succumbed; and even the Hagley ragging, though, according to Edward Lyttelton's book, it was only done with napkins, sounds formidable enough. Laura and Alfred enjoyed many things together—books, music and going to church—but they did

not laugh at the same things. I remember her once saying to me in a dejected voice:

"Wouldn't you have thought that, laughing as loud as the Lytteltons do, they would have loved Lear? Alfred says none of them think him a bit funny and was quite testy when I said his was the only family in the world that didn't."

It was his manliness, spirituality and freedom from pettiness that attracted Alfred to Laura; he also had infinite charm. It might have been said of him what the Dowager Lady Grey wrote of her husband to Henry when thanking him for his sympathy:

"He lit so many fires in cold rooms."

After Alfred's death, my husband said this of him in the House of Commons:

It would not, I think, be doing justice to the feelings which are uppermost in many of our hearts, if we passed to the business of the day without taking notice of the fresh gap which has been made in our ranks by the untimely death of Mr. Alfred Lyttelton. It is a loss of which I hardly trust myself to speak; for, apart from ties of relationship, there had subsisted between us for thirty-three years, a close friendship and affection which

no political differences were ever allowed to loosen, or even to affect. Nor could I better describe it than by saying that he, perhaps, of all men of this generation, came nearest to the mould and ideal of manhood, which every English father would like to see his son aspire to, and, if possible, to attain. The bounty of nature, enriched and developed not only by early training, but by constant self-discipline through life, blended in him gifts and graces which, taken alone, are rare, and in such attractive union are rarer still. Body, mind and character, the schoolroom, the cricket field, the Bar, the House of Commons—each made its separate contribution to the faculty and the experience of a many-sided and harmonious whole. But what he was he gave—gave with such ease and exuberance that I think it may be said without exaggeration that wherever he moved he seemed to radiate vitality and charm. He was, as we here know, a strenuous fighter. He has left behind him no resentments and no enmity; nothing but a gracious memory of a manly and winning personality, the memory of one who served with an unstinted measure of devotion his generation and country. He has been snatched away in what we thought was the full tide of buoyant life, still full of promise and of hope. What more can we say? We can only bow once again before the decrees of the Supreme Wisdom. Those who loved him—and they are many, in all schools of opinion, in all ranks and walks of life—when they think of him, will say to themselves:

This is the happy warrior, this is he
Who every man in arms should wish to be.

On the occasion of Alfred Lyttelton's second visit to Glen, I will quote my diary:

"Laura came into my bedroom. She was in a peignoir and asked me what she should wear for dinner. I said:

"'Your white muslin, and hurry up. Mr. Lyttelton is strumming in the Doo'cot and you had better go and entertain him, poor fellow, as he is leaving for London to-night.'

"She tied a blue ribbon in her hair, hastily thrust her diamond brooch into her fichu and then, with her eyes very big and her hair low and straight upon her forehead, she went into our sitting-room (we called it the Doo'cot, because we all quarrelled there). Feeling rather small, but, half-shy, half-bold, she shut the door and, leaning against it, watched Alfred strumming. He turned and gazed at the little figure so near him, so delicate in her white dress.

"The silence was broken by Alfred asking her if any man ever left Glen without telling her that he loved her; but suddenly all talk stopped and she

was in his arms, hiding her little face against his hard coat. There was no one to record what followed; only the night rising with passionate eyes: 'The hiding, receiving night that talks not.'

"They were married on the 10th of May, 1885.

"In April of 1886, Laura's baby was expected any day; and my mother was anxious that I should not be near her when the event took place. The Lytteltons lived in Upper Brook Street; and, Grosvenor Square being near, it was thought that any suffering on her part might make a lasting and painful impression on me, so I was sent down to Easton Grey to stay with Lucy and hunt in the Badminton country. Before going away, I went round to say good-bye to Laura and found her in a strange humour.

"LAURA: 'I am sure I shall die with my baby.'

"MARGOT: 'How can you talk such nonsense? Every one thinks that. Look at mamma! She had twelve children without a pang!'

"LAURA: 'I know she did; but I am sure I shall die.'

"MARGOT: 'I am just as likely to be killed out hunting as you are to die, darling! It makes me miserable to hear you talk like this.'

"LAURA: 'If I die, Margot, I want you to read my will to the relations and people that will be in my bedroom. It is in that drawer. Promise me you will not forget.'

"MARGOT: 'All right, darling, I will; but let us kneel down and pray that, whether it is me or you who die first, if it is God's will, one of us may come to the other down here and tell us the truth about the next world and console us as much as possible in this!' "

We knelt and prayed and, though I was more removed from the world and in the humour both to see and to hear what was not material, in my grief over Laura's death, which took place ten days later, I have never heard from her or of her from that day to this.

Mrs. Lyttelton has told the story of her husband's first marriage with so much perfection that I hesitate to go over the same ground again, but, as my sister Laura's death had more effect on me than any event in my life, except my own marriage and the birth of my children, I must copy a short account of it written at that time:

"On Saturday, 17th April, 1886, I was riding down a green slope in Gloucestershire while the Beaufort hounds were scattered below vainly trying to pick up the scent; they were on a stale line and the result had been general confusion. It was a hot day and the woods were full of children and primroses.

"The air was humming with birds and insects, nature wore an expectant look and all the hedgerows sparkled with the spangles of the spring. There was a prickly gap under a tree which divided me from my companions. I rode down to jump it, but, whether from breeding, laziness or temper, my horse turned round and refused to move. I took my foot out of the stirrup and gave him a slight kick. I remember nothing after that till I woke up in a cottage with a tremendous headache. They said that the branch was too low, or the horse jumped too big and a withered bough had caught me in the face. In consequence I had concussion of the brain; and my nose and upper lip were badly torn. I was picked up by my early fiancé. He tied my lip to my hair—as it was reposing on my chin—and took me home in a cart. The doctor was sent for, but there was no time to give me chloro-

form. I sat very still from vanity while three stitches were put through the most sensitive part of my nose. When it was all over, I looked at myself in the looking-glass and burst into tears. I had never been very pretty ("worse than that," as the Marquis of Soveral * said) but I had a straight nose and a look of intelligence; and now my face would be marked for life like a German student's.

"The next day a telegram arrived saying:

" 'Laura confined—a boy—both doing well.'

"We sent back a message saying:

" 'Hurrah and blessing!'

On Sunday we received a letter from Charty saying Laura was very ill and another on Monday telling us to go to London. I was in a state of acute anxiety and said to the doctor I must go and see Laura immediately, but he would not hear of it:

" 'Impossible! You'll get erysipelas and die. Most dangerous to move with a face like that,' he said.

"On the occasion of his next visit, I was dressed and walking up and down the room in a fume of nervous excitement, for go I *would*. Laura was dying (I did not really think she was, but I wanted

* The late Portuguese Minister.

to be near her). I insisted upon his taking the stitches out of my face and ultimately he had to give in. At 6 p.m. I was in the train for London, watching the telegraph-posts flying past me.

"My mind was going over every possibility. I was sitting near her bed with the baby on my arm, chattering over plans, arranging peignoirs, laughing at the nurse's anecdotes, talking and whispering over the thousand feminine things that I knew she would be longing to hear. . . . Or perhaps she was dying . . . asking for me and wondering why I did not come . . . thinking I was hunting instead of being with her. Oh, how often the train stopped! Did any one really live at these stations? No one got out; they did not look like real places; why should the train stop? Should I tell them Laura was dying? . . . We had prayed so often to die the same day. . . . Surely she was not going to die . . . it could not be . . . her vitality was too splendid, her youth too great . . . God would not allow this thing. How stiff my face felt with its bandages; and if I cried they would all come off!

"At Swindon I had to change. I got out and sat in the vast eating-room, with its atmosphere of

soup and gas. A crowd of people were talking of a hunting accident: this was mine. Then a woman came in and put her bag down. A clergyman shook hands with her; he said some one had died. I moved away.

"'*World! Trewth! The Globe!* Paper, miss? Paper? . . .'

"'No, thank you.'

"'London train!' was shouted and I got in. I knew by the loud galloping sound that we were going between high houses and at each gallop the wheels seemed to say, 'Too late—too late!' After a succession of hoarse screams we dashed into Paddington.

"It was midnight. I saw a pale, grave face, and recognised Evan Charteris, who had come in Lady Wemyss' brougham to meet me. I said:

"'Is she dead?'

"To which he answered:

"'No, but very, very ill.'

"We drove in silence to 4 Upper Brook Street. Papa, Jack and Godfrey Webb stood in the hall. They stopped me as I passed and said: 'She is no worse'; but I could not listen. I saw Arthur

Ribblesdale · 1884 ·

LORD RIBBLESDALE, WHOSE FIRST WIFE WAS CHARTY TENNANT. HE AFTERWARDS MARRIED MRS. JOHN ASTOR (AVA WILLING)

Balfour and Spencer Lyttelton standing near the door of Alfred's room. They said:

"'You look ill. Have you had a fall?'

"I explained the plaster on my swollen face and asked if I might go upstairs to see Laura; and they said they thought I might. When I got to the top landing, I stood in the open doorway of the boudoir. A man was sitting in an arm-chair by a table with a candle on it. It was Alfred and I passed on. I saw the silhouette of a woman through the open door of Laura's room; this was Charty. We held each other close to our hearts . . . her face felt hot and her eyes were heavy.

"'Don't look at her to-night, sweet. She is unconscious,' she said.

"I did not take this in and asked to be allowed to say one word to her. . . . I said:

"'I know she'd like to see me, darling, if only just to nod to, and I promise I will go away quickly. Indeed, indeed I would not tire her! I want to tell her the train was late and the doctor would not let me come up yesterday. Only one second, *please,* Charty! . . .'

"'But, my darling heart, she's unconscious. She

has never been conscious all day. She would not know you!'

"I sank stunned upon the stair. Some one touched my shoulder:

" 'You had better go to bed, it is past one. No, you can't sleep here: there's no bed. You must lie down; a sofa won't do, you are too ill. Very well, then, you are *not* ill, but you will be to-morrow if you don't go to bed.'

"I found myself in the street, Arthur Balfour holding one of my arms and Spencer Lyttelton the other. They took me to 40 Grosvenor Square. I went to bed and early next morning I went across to Upper Brook Street. The servant looked happy:

" 'She's better, miss, and she's conscious.'

"I flew upstairs, and Charty met me in her dressing-gown. She was calm and capable as always, but a new look, less questioning and more intense, had come into her face. She said:

" 'You can go in now.'

"I felt a rushing of my soul and an over-eagerness that half-stopped me as I opened the door and stood at the foot of the wooden bed and gazed at what was left of Laura.

"Her face had shrunk to the size of a child's; her lashes lay a black wall on the whitest of cheeks; her hair was hanging dragged up from her square brow in heavy folds upon the pillow. Her mouth was tightly shut and a dark blood-stain marked her chin. After a long silence, she moved and muttered and opened her eyes. She fixed them on me, and my heart stopped. I stretched my hands out towards her, and said, 'Laura!' . . . But the sound died; she did not know me. I knew after that she could not live.

"People went away for the Easter Holidays: Papa to North Berwick, Arthur Balfour to Westward Ho! and every day Godfrey Webb rode a patient cob up to the front door, to hear that she was no better. I sat on the stairs listening to the roar of London and the clock in the library. The doctor—Matthews Duncan—patted my head whenever he passed me on the stair and said, in his gentle Scotch accent:

" 'Poor little girl! Poor, poor little girl!'

"I was glad he did not say that 'while there was life there was hope,' or any of the medical platitudes, or I would have replied that he *lied.* There was no hope—none! . . .

"One afternoon I went with Lucy to St. George's, Hanover Square. The old man was sweeping out the church; and we knelt and prayed. Laura and I have often knelt side by side at that altar and I never feel alone when I am in front of the mysterious Christ-picture, with its bars of violet and bunches of grapes.

"On my return I went upstairs and lay on the floor of Laura's bedroom, watching Alfred kneeling by her side with his arms over his head. Charty sat with her hands clasped; a single candle behind her head transfigured her lovely hair into a halo. Suddenly Laura opened her eyes and, turning them slowly on Charty, said:

" 'You are *heavenly!* . . .'

"A long pause, and then while we were all three drawing near her bed we heard her say:

" 'I think God has forgotten me.'

"The fire was weaving patterns on the ceiling; every shadow seemed to be looking with pity on the silence of that room, the long silence that has never been broken.

. . . . . .

"I did not go home that night, but slept at Alfred's house. Lucy had gone to the early Com-

munion, but I had not accompanied her, as I was tired of praying. I must have fallen into a heavy sleep, when suddenly I felt some one touching my bed. I woke with a start and saw nurse standing beside me. She said in a calm voice:

" 'My dear, you must come. Don't look like that; you won't be able to walk.'

"Able to walk! Of course I was! I was in my dressing-gown and downstairs in a flash and on to the bed. The room was full of people. I lay with my arm under Laura, as I did in the old Glen days, when after our quarrels we crept into each other's beds to 'make it up.' Alfred was holding one of her hands against his forehead; and Charty was kneeling at her feet.

"She looked much the same, but a deeper shadow ran under her brow and her mouth seemed to be harder shut. I put my cheek against her shoulder and felt the sharpness of her spine. For a minute we lay close to each other, while the sun, fresh from the dawn, played upon the window-blinds. . . . Then her breathing stopped; she gave a shiver and died. . . . The silence was so great that I heard the flight of Death and the morning salute her soul.

"I went downstairs and took her will out of the drawer where she had put it and told Alfred what she had asked me to do. The room was dark with people; and a tall man, gaunt and fervid, was standing up saying a prayer. When he had finished I read the will through:

My Will* made by me, Laura Mary Octavia Lyttelton, February, 1886.

"I have not much to leave behind me, should I die next month, having my treasure deep in my heart where no one can reach it, and where even Death cannot enter. But there are some things that have long lain at the gates of my Joy House that in some measure have the colour of my life in them, and would, by rights of love, belong to those who have entered there. I should like Alfred to give these things to my friends, not because my friends will care so much for them, but because they will love best being where I loved to be.

"I want, first of all, to tell Alfred that all I have in the world and all I am and ever shall be, belongs to him, and to him more than any one, so that if I leave away from him anything that speaks to him of a joy unknown to me, or that he holds dear for any reason wise or unwise, it is his, and my dear friends will forgive him and me.

"So few women have been as happy as I have been every hour since I married—so few have had

*The only part of the will I have left out is a few names with blank spaces which she intended to fill up.

such a wonderful sky of love for their common atmosphere, that perhaps it will seem strange when I write down that the sadness of Death and Parting is greatly lessened to me by the fact of my consciousness of the eternal, indivisible oneness of Alfred and me. I feel as long as he is down here I must be here, silently, secretly sitting beside him as I do every evening now, however much my soul is the other side, and that if Alfred were to die, we would be as we were on earth, love as we did this year, only fuller, quicker, deeper than ever, with a purer passion and a wiser worship. Only in the meantime, whilst my body is hid from him and my eyes cannot see him, let my trivial toys be his till the morning comes when nothing will matter because all is spirit.

"If my baby lives I should like it to have my pearls. I do not love my diamond necklace, so I won't leave it to any one.

"I would like Alfred to have my Bible. It has always rather worried him to hold because it is so full of things; but if I know I am dying, I will clean it out, because, I suppose, he won't like to after. I think I am fonder of it—not, I mean, because it's the Bible—but because it's such a friend, and has been always with me, chiefly under my pillow, ever since I had it—than of anything I possess, and I used to read it a great deal when I was much better than I am now. I love it very much, so, Alfred, you must keep it for me.

"Then the prayer book Francie* gave me is

*Lady Horner, of Mells.

what I love next, and I love it so much I feel I would like to take it with me. Margot wants a prayer book, so I leave it to her. It is so dirty outside, but perhaps it would be a pity to bind it. Margot is to have my darling little *Daily Light,* too.

"Then Charty is to have my paste necklace she likes, and any two prints she cares to have, and my little trefeuille diamond brooch—oh! and the *Hope* she painted for me. I love it very much, and my amethyst beads.

"Little Barbara is to have my blue watch, and Tommy my watch—there is no chain.

"Then Lucy is to have my Frances belt, because a long time ago the happiest days of my girlhood were when we first got to know Francie, and she wore that belt in the blue days at St. Moritz when we met her at church and I became her lover; and I want Lucy to have my two Blakes and the dear little Martin Schöngaun *Madonna and Baby*—dear little potbellied baby, sucking his little sacred thumb in a garden with a beautiful wall and a little pigeon-house turret. I bought it myself, and do rather think it was clever of me—all for a pound.

"And Posie is to have my little diamond wreaths, and she must leave them to Joan,* and she is to have my garnets too, because she used to like them, and my *Imitation* and Marcus Aurelius.

"I leave Eddy my little diamond necklace for his wife, and he must choose a book.

*My niece, Mrs. Jamie Lindsay.

"And Frank is just going to be married, so I would like him to have some bit of my furniture, and his wife my little silver clock.

"I leave Jack the little turquoise ring Graham gave me. He must have it made into a stud.

"Then I want Lavinia* to have my bagful of silver dressing-things Papa gave me, and the little diamond and sapphire bangle I am so fond of; and tell her what a joy it has been to know her, and that the little open window has let in many sunrises on my married life. She will understand.

"Then I want old Lucy† to have my edition of the *Pilgrim's Progress,* that dear old one, and my photograph in the silver frame of Alfred, if my baby dies too, otherwise it is to belong to him (or her). Lucy was Alfred's little proxy-mother, and she deserves him. He sent the photograph to me the first week we were engaged, and I have carried it about ever since. I don't think it very good. It always frightened me a little; it is so stern and just, and the 'just man' has never been a hero of mine. I love Alfred when he is what he is to me, and I don't feel that is just, but generous.

"Then I want Edward‡ to have the *Days of Creation,* and Charles§ to have my first editions of Shelley, and Arthur¶ my first edition of Beaumont

*Lavinia Talbot is wife of the present Bishop of Winchester.

†Lady Frederick Cavendish, whose husband was murdered in Ireland.

‡The late Head Master of Eton.

§The present Lord Cobham, Alfred's eldest brother.

¶The late Hon. Arthur Temple Lyttelton, Bishop of Southampton.

and Fletcher; and Kathleen* is to have my little silver crucifix that opens, and Alfred must put in a little bit of my hair, and Kathleen must keep it for my sake—I loved her from the first.

"I want Alfred to give my godchild, Cicely Horner,† the bird-brooch Burne Jones designed, and the *Sintram* Arthur‡ gave me. I leave my best friend, Frances, my grey enamel and diamond bracelet, my first edition of *Wilhelm Meister,* with the music folded up in it, and my Burne Jones ' 'spression' drawings. Tell her I leave a great deal of my life with her, and that I never can cease to be very near her.

"I leave Mary Elcho§ my Chippendale cradle. She must not think it bad luck. I suppose some one else possessed it once, and, after all, it isn't as if I died in it! She gave me the lovely hangings, and I think she will love it a little for my sake, because I always loved cradles and all cradled things; and I leave her my diamond and red enamel crescent Arthur gave me. She must wear it because two of her dear friends are in it, as it were. And I would like her to have oh! such a blessed life, because I think her character is so full of blessed things and symbols. . . .

"I leave Arthur Balfour—Alfred's and my dear, deeply loved friend, who has given me so many happy hours since I married, and whose sympathy, understanding, and companionship in

*The late Hon. Mrs. Arthur Lyttelton.
†The present Hon. Mrs. George Lambton.
‡The Right Hon. Arthur Balfour.
§The present Countess of Wemyss.

the deep sense of the word has never been withheld from me when I have sought it, which has not been seldom this year of my blessed Vita Nuova—I leave him my Johnson. He taught me to love that wisest of men—and I have much to be grateful for in this. I leave him, too, my little ugly Shelley—much read, but not in any way beautiful; if he marries I should like him to give his wife my little red enamel harp—I shall never see her if I die now, but I have so often created her in the Islands of my imagination—and as a Queen has she reigned there, so that I feel in the spirit we are in some measure related by some mystic tie."

Out of the many letters Alfred received, this is the one I liked best:

HAWARDEN CASTLE,
April 27th, 1886.

MY DEAR ALFRED,

It is a daring and perhaps a selfish thing to speak to you at a moment when your mind and heart are a sanctuary in which God is speaking to you in tones even more than usually penetrating and solemn. Certainly it pertains to few to be chosen to receive such lessons as are being taught you. If the wonderful trials of Apostles, Saints and Martyrs have all meant a love in like proportion wonderful, then, at this early period of your life, your lot has something in common with theirs, and you will bear upon you life-long marks of a great and peculiar dispensation which may and should lift you very high. Certainly you two who

are still one were the persons whom in all the vast circuit of London life those near you would have pointed to as exhibiting more than any others the promise and the profit of *both* worlds. The call upon you for thanksgiving seemed greater than on any one—you will not deem it lessened now. How eminently true it is of her that in living a short she fulfilled a long time. If Life is measured by intensity, hers was a very long life—and yet with that rich development of mental gifts, purity and singleness made her one of the little children of whom and of whose like is the Kingdom of Heaven. Bold would it indeed be to say such a being died prematurely. All through your life, however it be prolonged, what a precious possession to you she will be. But in giving her to your bodily eye and in taking her away the Almighty has specially set His seal upon you. To Peace and to God's gracious mercy let us heartily, yes, cheerfully, commend her. Will you let Sir Charles and Lady Tennant and all her people know how we feel with and for them?

Ever your affec.

W. E. GLADSTONE.

Matthew Arnold sent me this poem because Jowett told him I said it might have been written for Laura:

REQUIESCAT

Strew on her roses, roses,
And never a spray of yew!
In quiet she reposes;
Ah, would that I did too!

Her mirth the world required;
She bathed it in smiles of glee.
But her heart was tired, tired,
And now they let her be.

Her life was turning, turning,
In mazes of heat and sound,
But for peace her soul was yearning,
And now peace laps her round.

Her cabin'd, ample spirit,
It flutter'd and fail'd for breath.
To-night it doth inherit
The vasty hall of death.

CHAPTER III

SLUMMING IN LONDON; ADVENTURE IN WHITECHAPEL; BRAWL IN A SALOON; OUTINGS WITH WORKING GIRLS—MARGOT MEETS THE PRINCESS OF WALES—GOSSIP OVER FRIENDSHIP WITH PRINCE OF WALES—LADY RANDOLPH CHURCHILL'S BALL—MARGOT'S FIRST HUNT; ECCENTRIC DUKE OF BEAUFORT; FALLS IN LOVE AT SEVENTEEN; COMMANDEERS A HORSE

AFTER Laura's death I spent most of my time in the East End of London. One day, when I was walking in the slums of Whitechapel, I saw a large factory and girls of all ages pouring in and out of it. Seeing the name "Cliffords" on the door, I walked in and asked a workman to show me his employer's private room. He indicated with his finger where it was and I knocked and went in. Mr. Cliffords, the owner of the factory, had a large red face and was sitting in a bare, squalid room, on a hard chair, in front of his writing-table. He glanced at me as I shut the door, but did not stop writing. I asked him if I might visit his factory

once or twice a week and talk to the work-girls. At this he put his pen down and said:

"Now, miss, what good do you suppose you will do here with my girls?"

MARGOT: "It is not exactly *that*. I am not sure I can do any one any good, but do you think I could do your girls any harm?"

CLIFFORDS: "Most certainly you could and, what is more, you *will*."

MARGOT: "How?"

CLIFFORDS: "Why, bless my soul! You'll keep them all jawing and make them late for their work! As it is, they don't do overmuch. Do you think my girls are wicked and that you are going to make them good and happy and save them and all that kind of thing?"

MARGOT: "Not at all; I was not thinking of them, *I* am so very unhappy myself."

CLIFFORDS (*rather moved and looking at me with curiosity*): "Oh, that's quite another matter! If you've come here to ask me a favour, I might consider it."

MARGOT (*humbly*): "That is just what I have come for. I swear I would only be with your girls in the dinner interval, but if by accident I arrive

at the wrong time I will see that they do not stop their work. It is far more likely that they won't listen to me at all than that they will stop working to hear what I have to say."

CLIFFORDS: "Maybe!"

So it was fixed up. He shook me by the hand, never asked my name and I visited his factory three days a week for eight years when I was in London (till I married, in 1894).

The East End of London was not a new experience to me. Laura and I had started a crèche at Wapping the year I came out; and in following up the cases of deserving beggars I had come across a variety of slums. I have derived as much interest and more benefit from visiting the poor than the rich and I get on better with them. What was new to me in Whitechapel was the head of the factory.

Mr. Cliffords was what the servants describe as "a man who keeps himself to himself," gruff, harsh, straight and clever. He hated all his girls and no one would have supposed, had they seen us together, that he liked me; but, after I had observed him blocking the light in the doorway of the room when I was speaking, I knew that I should get on with him.

The first day I went into the barn of a place where the boxes were made, I was greeted by a smell of glue and perspiration and a roar of wheels on the cobblestones in the yard. Forty or fifty women, varying in age from sixteen to sixty, were measuring, cutting and glueing cardboard and paper together; not one of them looked up from her work as I came in.

I climbed upon a hoarding, and kneeling down, pinned a photograph of Laura on a space of the wall. This attracted the attention of an elderly woman who turned to her companions and said:

"Come and have a look at this, girls! why, it's to the life!"

Seeing some of the girls leave their work and remembering my promise to Cliffords, I jumped up and told them that in ten minutes' time they would be having their dinners and then I would like to speak to them, but that until then they must not stop their work. I was much relieved to see them obey me. Some of them kept sandwiches in dirty paper bags which they placed on the floor with their hats, but when the ten minutes were over I was disappointed to see nearly all of them disappear. I asked where they had gone to and

was told that they either joined the men packers or went to the public-house round the corner.

The girls who brought sandwiches and stayed behind liked my visits and gradually became my friends. One of them—Phoebe Whitman by name—was beautiful and had more charm than the others for me; I asked her one day if she would take me with her to the public-house where she always lunched, as I had brought my food with me in a bag and did not suppose the public-house people would mind my eating it there with a glass of beer. This request of mine distressed the girls who were my friends. They thought it a terrible idea that I should go among drunkards, but I told them I had brought a book with me which they could look at and read out loud to each other while I was away—at which they nodded gravely—and I went off with my beautiful cockney.

The "Peggy Bedford" was in the lowest quarter of Whitechapel and crowded daily with sullen and sad-looking people. It was hot, smelly and draughty. When we went in I observed that Phoebe was a favourite; she waved her hand gaily here and there and ordered herself a glass of bitter. The men who had been hanging about outside and

in different corners of the room joined up to the counter on her arrival and I heard a lot of chaff going on while she tossed her pretty head and picked at potted shrimps. The room was too crowded for any one to notice me; and I sat quietly in a corner eating my sandwiches and smoking my cigarette. The frosted-glass double doors swung to and fro and the shrill voices of children asking for drinks and carrying them away in their mugs made me feel profoundly unhappy. I followed one little girl through the doors out into the street and saw her give the mug to a cabman and run off delighted with his tip. When I returned I was deafened by a babel of voices; there was a row going on: one of the men, drunk but good-tempered, was trying to take the flower out of Phoebe's hat. Provoked by this, a young man began jostling him, at which all the others pressed forward; the barman shouted ineffectually to them to stop; they merely cursed him and said that they were backing Phoebe. A woman, more drunk than the others, swore at being disturbed and said that Phoebe was a blasted something that I could not understand. Suddenly I saw her hitting out like a prize-fighter; and the men formed a ring round

them. I jumped up, seized an under-fed, bleareyed being who was nearest to me and flung him out of my way. Rage and disgust inspired me with great physical strength; but I was prevented from breaking through the ring by a man seizing my arm and saying:

"Let be or her man will give you a damned thrashing!"

Not knowing which of the women he was alluding to, I dipped down and, dodging the crowd, broke through the ring and flung myself upon Phoebe; my one fear was that she would be too late for her work and that the promise I had made to Cliffords would be broken.

Women fight very awkwardly and I was battered about between the two. I turned and cursed the men standing round for laughing and doing nothing and, before I could separate the combatants, I had given and received heavy blows; but unexpected help came from a Cliffords packer who happened to look in. We extricated ourselves as well as we could and ran back to the factory. I made Phoebe apologise to the chief for being late and, feeling stiff all over, returned home to Grosvenor Square.

Cliffords, who was an expert boxer, invited me into his room on my next visit to tell him the whole story and my shares went up.

By the end of July all the girls—about fifty-two—stayed with me after their work and none of them went to the "Peggy Bedford."

The Whitechapel murders took place close to the factory about that time, and the girls and I visited what the journalists call "the scene of the tragedy." It was strange watching crowds of people collected daily to see nothing but an archway.

I took my girls for an annual treat to the country every summer, starting at eight in the morning and getting back to London at midnight. We drove in three large wagonettes behind four horses, accompanied by a brass band. On one occasion I was asked if the day could be spent at Caterham, because there were barracks there. I thought it a dreary place and strayed away by myself, but Phoebe and her friends enjoyed glueing their noses to the rails and watching the soldiers drill. I do not know how the controversy arose, but when I joined them I heard Phoebe shout through the railings that some one was a "bloody fish!" I warned her that I should leave Cliffords for ever,

if she went on provoking rows and using such violent language, and this threat upset her; for a short time she was on her best behaviour, but I confess I find the poor just as uninfluenceable and ungrateful as the rich, and I often wonder what became of Phoebe Whitman.

At the end of July I told the girls that I had to leave them, as I was going back to my home in Scotland.

PHOEBE: "You don't know, lady, how much we all feels for you having to live in the country. Why, when you pointed out to us on the picnic-day that kind of a tower-place, with them walls and dark trees, and said it reminded you of your home, we just looked at each other! 'Well, I never!' sez I; and we all shuddered!"

None of the girls knew what my name was or where I lived till they read about me in the picture-papers, eight years later at the time of my marriage.

. . . . . .

When I was not in the East-end of London, I wandered about looking at the shop-windows in the West. One day I was admiring a photograph of my sister Charty in the window of Macmichael's, when a footman touched his hat and asked me if

I would speak to "her Grace" in the carriage. I turned round and saw the Duchess of Manchester*; as I had never spoken to her in my life, I wondered what she could possibly want me for. After shaking hands, she said:

"Jump in, dear child! I can't bear to see you look so sad. Jump in and I'll take you for a drive and you can come back to tea with me."

I got into the carriage and we drove round Hyde Park, after which I followed her upstairs to her boudoir in Great Stanhope Street. In the middle of tea Queen Alexandra—then Princess of Wales—came in to see the Duchess. She ran in unannounced and kissed her hostess.

My heart beat when I looked at her. She had more real beauty, both of line and expression, and more dignity than any one I had ever seen; and I can never forget that first meeting.

These were the days of the great beauties. London worshipped beauty like the Greeks. Photographs of the Princess of Wales, Mrs. Langtry, Mrs. Cornwallis West, Mrs. Wheeler and Lady Dudley † collected crowds in front of the shop win-

*Afterwards the late Duchess of Devonshire.
†Georgiana, Countess of Dudley.

dows. I have seen great and conventional ladies like old Lady Cadogan and others standing on iron chairs in the Park to see Mrs. Langtry walk past; and wherever Georgiana Lady Dudley drove there were crowds round her carriage when it pulled up, to see this vision of beauty, holding a large holland umbrella over the head of her lifeless husband.

Groups of beauties like the Moncrieffes, Grahams, Conynghams, de Moleynses, Lady Mary Mills, Lady Randolph Churchill, Mrs. Arthur Sassoon, Lady Dalhousie, Lady March, Lady Londonderry and Lady de Grey were to be seen in the salons of the 'eighties. There is nothing at all like this in London to-day and I doubt if there is any one now with enough beauty or temperament to provoke a fight in Rotten Row between gentlemen in high society: an incident of my youth which I was privileged to witness and which caused a profound sensation.

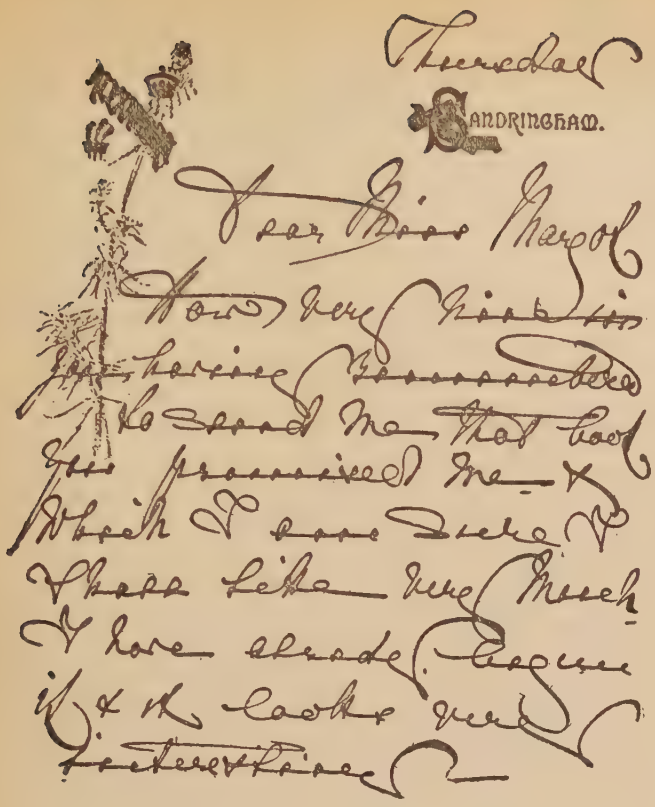
Queen Alexandra had a more perfect face than any of those I have mentioned; it is visible even now, because the oval is still there, the frownless brows, the carriage and, above all, the grace both of movement and of gesture which made her the idol of her people.

Thursday

SANDRINGHAM.

Dear Miss Margot

How very nice in you having remembered to send me that book you promised me & which I am sure I shall like very much I have already begun it & it looks very interesting —



Letter from the Princess of Wales thanking me for "Plain Tales from the Hills" by R. Kipling wh I gave her. April 1890.

London society is neither better nor worse than it was in the 'eighties; there is less talent and less intellectual ambition and much less religion; but where all the beauty has gone to I cannot think!

When the Princess of Wales walked into the Duchess of Manchester's boudoir that afternoon, I got up to go away, but the Duchess presented me to her and they asked me to stay and have tea, which I was delighted to do. I sat watching her, with my teacup in my hand, thrilled with admiration.

Queen Alexandra's total absence of egotism and the warmth of her manner, prompted not by consideration, but by sincerity, her gaiety of heart and refinement—rarely to be seen in royal people—inspired me with a love for her that day from which I have never departed.

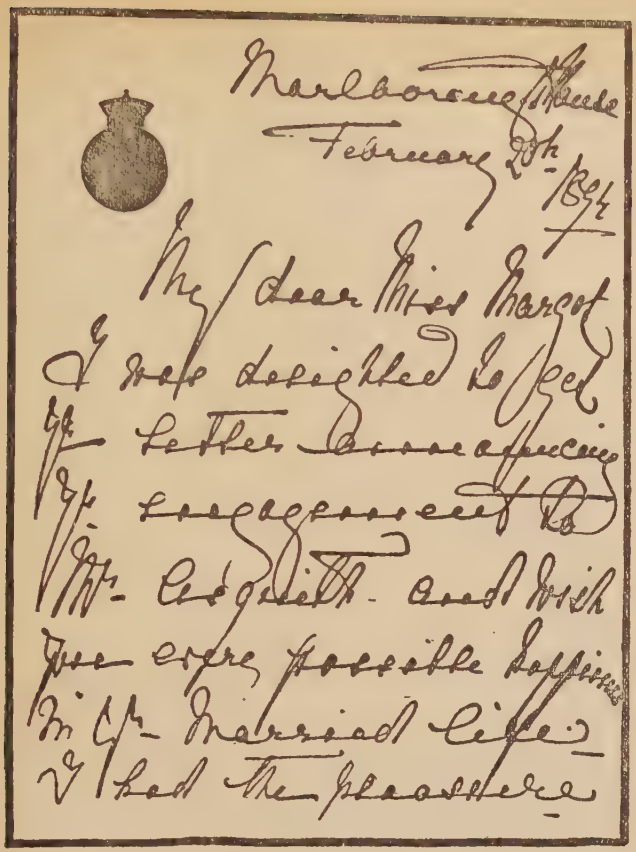
I had been presented to the Prince of Wales—before I met the Princess—by Lady Dalhousie, in the Paddock at Ascot. He asked me if I would back my fancy for the Wokingham Stakes and have a little bet with him on the race. We walked down to the rails and watched the horses gallop past. One of them went down in great form; I verified him by his colours and found he was called

Wokingham. I told the Prince that he was a sure winner; but out of so many entries no one was more surprised than I was when my horse came romping in. I was given a gold cigarette-case and went home much pleased.

King Edward had great charm and personality and enormous prestige; he was more touchy than King George and fonder of pleasure. He and Queen Alexandra, before they succeeded, were the leaders of London society; they practically dictated what people could and could not do; every woman wore a new dress when she dined at Marlborough House; and we vied with each other in trying to please him.

Opinions differ as to the precise function of royalty, but no one doubts that it is a valuable and necessary part of our Constitution. Just as the Lord Mayor represents commerce, the Prime Minister the Government, and the Commons the people, the King represents society. Voltaire said we British had shown true genius in preventing our kings by law from doing anything but good. This sounds well, but we all know that laws do not prevent men from doing harm.

The two kings that I have known have had in a



[OVER]

of making the acquaintance
of Yr future husband
a short time ago
at Sandringham —
& in him I am sure
you will always find
a most clever & genial
Companion — but
allow me to say that
altho' he is now the
Home Secretary, you
will soon be "the Home
Ruler" —
I hope by this time
you have quite recovered
from Yr accident
out hunting
Believe me with
renewed good wishes
in which the Prince
joins Yrs sincerely
Alexandra

high degree both physical and moral courage and have shown a sense of duty unparalleled in the Courts of Europe; it is this that has given them their stability; and added to this their simplicity of nature has won for them our lasting love.

They have been exceptionally fortunate in their private secretaries: Lord Knollys and Lord Stamfordham are liberal-minded men of the highest honour and discretion; and I am proud to call them my friends.

Before I knew the Prince and Princess of Wales, I did not go to fashionable balls, but after that Ascot I was asked everywhere. I was quite unconscious of it at the time, but was told afterwards that people were beginning to criticise me; one or two incidents might have enlightened me had I been more aware of myself.

One night, when I was dining *tête-à-tête* with my beloved friend, Godfrey Webb, in his flat in Victoria Street, my father sent the brougham for me with a message to ask if I would accompany him to supper at Lord and Lady Randolph Churchill's, where we had been invited to meet the Prince of Wales. I said I should be delighted if I could keep on the dress that I was wearing, but as it was late

and I had to get up early next day I did not want to change my clothes; he said he supposed my dress would be quite smart enough, so we drove to the Randolph Churchills' house together.

I had often wanted to know Lord Randolph, but it was only a few days before the supper that I had had the good fortune to sit next to him at dinner. When he observed that he had been put next to a "miss," he placed his left elbow firmly on the table and turned his back upon me through several courses. I could not but admire the way he appeared to eat everything with one hand. I do not know whether it was the lady on his right or what it was that prompted him, but he ultimately turned round and asked me if I knew any politicians. I told him that, with the exception of himself, I knew them all intimately. This surprised him, and after discussing Lord Rosebery—to whom he was devoted—he said:

"Do you know Lord Salisbury?"

I told him that I had forgotten his name in my list, but that I would like above everything to meet him; at which he remarked that I was welcome to all his share of him, adding:

"What do you want to know him for?"

LORD GLENCONNER: PRESENT OWNER OF GLEN, WHO APPEARS IN THE DIARY AS EDDY. HE MARRIED ONE OF THE WYNDHAM SISTERS

MARGOT: "Because I think he is amazingly amusing and a very fine writer."

LORD RANDOLPH (*muttering something I could not catch about Salisbury lying dead at his feet*): "I wish to God that I had *never* known him!"

MARGOT: "I am afraid you resigned more out of temper than conviction, Lord Randolph."

At this he turned completely round and, gazing at me, said:

"Confound your cheek! What do you know about me and my convictions? I hate Salisbury! He jumped at my resignation like a dog at a bone. The Tories are ungrateful, short-sighted beasts. I hope you are a Liberal?"

I informed him that I was and exactly what I thought of the Tory party; and we talked through the rest of dinner. Towards the end of our conversation he asked me who I was. I told him that, after his manners to me in the earlier part of the evening, it was perhaps better that we should remain strangers. However, after a little chaff, we made friends and he said that he would come and see me in Grosvenor Square.

On the night of the supper-party, I was wearing a white muslin dress with transparent chemise

sleeves, a fichu and a long skirt with a Nattier blue taffeta sash. I had taken a bunch of rose carnations out of a glass and pinned them into my fichu with three diamond ducks given me by Lord Carmichael, our delightful Peeblesshire friend and neighbour.

On my arrival at the Churchills', I observed all the fine ladies wearing ball-dresses off the shoulder and their tiaras. This made me very conspicuous and I wished profoundly that I had changed into something smarter before going out.

The Prince of Wales had not arrived and, as our hostess was giving orders to the White Hungarian Band, my father and I had to walk into the room alone.

I saw several of the ladies eyeing my toilette, and having painfully sharp ears I heard some of their remarks:

"Do look at Miss Tennant! She is in her night-gown!"

"I suppose it is meant to be 'ye olde Englishe pictury!' I wonder she has not let her hair down like the Juliets at the Oakham balls!"

Another, more charitable, said:

"I daresay no one told her that the Prince of

A CARICATURE OF LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL ON THE OCCASION OF HIS TRIP TO SOUTH AFRICA

Wales was coming. . . . Poor child! What a shame!"

And finally a man said:

"There is nothing so odd as the passion some people have for self-advertisement; it only shows what it is to be intellectual!"

At that moment our hostess came up to us with a charming *accueil.*

The first time I saw Lady Randolph was at Punchestown races, in 1887, where I went with my new friends, Mrs. Bunbury, Hatfield Harter and Peter Flower. I was standing at the double when I observed a woman next to me in a Black Watch tartan skirt, braided coat and astrachan hussar's cap. She had a forehead like a panther's and great wild eyes that looked through you; she was so arresting that I followed her about till I found some one who could tell me who she was.

Had Lady Randolph Churchill been like her face, she could have governed the world.

My father and I were much relieved at her greeting; and while we were talking the Prince of Wales arrived. The ladies fell into position, ceased chattering and made subterranean curtsies. He came straight up to me and told me I was to sit on the

other side of him at supper. I said, hanging my head with becoming modesty and in a loud voice:

"Oh no, Sir, I am not dressed at all for the part! I had better slip away, I had no notion this was going to be such a smart party. . . . I expect some of the ladies here think I have insulted them by coming in my night-gown!"

I saw every one straining to hear what the Prince's answer would be, but I took good care that we should move out of earshot. At that moment Lord Hartington* came up and told me I was to go in to supper with him. More than ever I wished I had changed my dress, for now every one was looking at me with even greater curiosity than hostility.

The supper was gay and I had remarkable talks which laid the foundation of my friendship both with King Edward and the Duke of Devonshire. The Prince told me he had had a dull youth, as Queen Victoria could not get over the Prince Consort's death and kept up an exaggerated mourning. He said he hoped that when I met his mother I should not be afraid of her, adding, with a charming smile, that with the exception of John

*The late Duke of Devonshire.

Brown everybody was. I assured him with perfect candour that I was afraid of no one. He was much amused when I told him that before he had arrived that evening some of the ladies had whispered that I was in my night-gown and I hope he did not think me lacking in courtesy because I had not put on a ball-dress. He assured me that on the contrary he admired my frock very much and thought I looked like an old picture. This remark made me see uncomfortable visions of the Oakham ball and he did not dispel them by adding:

"You are so original! You must dance the cotillion with me."

I told him that I could not possibly stay, it would bore my father stiff, as he hated sitting up late; also I was not dressed for dancing and had no idea there was going to be a ball. When supper was over, I made my best curtsy and, after presenting my father to the Prince, went home to bed.

Lord Hartington told me in the course of our conversation at supper that Lady Grosvenor* was by far the most dangerous syren in London and that he would not answer for any man keeping his

*The Countess of Grosvenor.

head or his heart when with her, to which I entirely agreed.

When the London season came to an end we all went up to Glen.

. . . . . .

Here I must retrace my steps.

In the winter of 1880 I went to stay with my sister, Lucy Graham Smith, in Wiltshire.

I was going out hunting for the first time, never having seen a fox, a hound or a fence in my life; my heart beat as my sisters superintending my toilette put the last hair-pin into a crinkly knot of hair; I pulled on my top-boots and, running down to the front door, found Ribblesdale, who was mounting me, waiting to drive me to the meet. Hounds met at Christian Malford station.

Not knowing that with the Duke of Beaufort's hounds every one wore blue and buff, I was disappointed at the appearance of the field. No one has ever suggested that a touch of navy blue improves a landscape; and, although I had never been out hunting before, I had looked forward to seeing scarlet coats.

We moved off, jostling each other as thick as sardines, to draw the nearest cover. My mount was

peacocking on the grass when suddenly we heard a "Halloa!" and the whole field went hammering like John Gilpin down the hard high road.

Plunging through a gap, I dashed into the open country. Storm flung herself up to the stars over the first fence and I found myself seated on the wettest of wet ground, angry but unhurt; all the stragglers—more especially the funkers—agreeably diverted from pursuing the hunt, galloped off to catch my horse. I walked to a cottage; and nearly an hour afterwards Storm was returned to me.

After this contretemps my mount was more amenable and I determined that nothing should unseat me again. Not being hurt by a fall gives one a sense of exhilaration and I felt ready to face an arm of the sea.

The scattered field were moving aimlessly about, some looking for their second horses, some eating an early sandwich, some in groups laughing and smoking and no one knowing anything about the hounds; I was a little away from the others and wondering—like all amateurs—why we were wasting so much time, when a fine old gentleman on a

huge horse came up to me and said, with a sweet smile:

"Do you always whistle out hunting?"

MARGOT: "I didn't know I was whistling. . . . I've never hunted before."

STRANGER: "Is this really the first time you've ever been out with hounds?"

MARGOT: "Yes, it is."

STRANGER: "How wonderfully you ride! But I am sorry to see you have taken a toss."

MARGOT: "I fell off at the first fence, for though I've ridden all my life I've never jumped before."

STRANGER: "Were you frightened when you fell?"

MARGOT: "No, my horse was. . . ."

STRANGER: "Would you like to wear the blue and buff?"

MARGOT: "It's pretty for women, but I don't think it looks sporting for men, though I see you wear it; but in any case I could not get the blue habit."

STRANGER: "Why not?"

MARGOT: "Because the old Duke of Beaufort only gives it to women who own coverts; I

am told he hates people who go hard and after to-day I mean to ride like the devil."

STRANGER: "Oh, do you? But is the 'old Duke,' as you call him, so severe?"

MARGOT: "I've no idea; I've never seen him or any other duke!"

STRANGER: "If I told you I could get you the blue habit, what would you say?"

MARGOT (*with a patronising smile*): "I'm afraid I should say you were running hares!"

STRANGER: "You would have to wear a top-hat, you know, and you would not like that! But, if you are going to ride like the devil, it might save your neck; and in any case it would keep your hair tidy."

MARGOT (*anxiously pushing back her stray curls*): "Why, is my hair very untidy? It is the first time it has ever been up; and, when I was 'thrown from my horse,' as the papers call it, all the hair-pins got loose."

STRANGER: "It doesn't matter with your hair; it is so pretty I think I shall call you Miss Fluffy! By the bye, what is your name?"

When I told him he was much surprised:

"Oh, then you are a sister-in-law of the Ancestor's, are you?"

This was the first time I ever heard Ribblesdale called "the Ancestor"; and as I did not know what he meant, I said:

"And who are you?"

To which he replied:

"I am the Duke of Beaufort and I am not running hares this time. I will give you the blue habit, but you know you will have to wear a top-hat."

MARGOT: "Good gracious! I hope I've said nothing to offend you? Do you always do this sort of thing when you meet any one like me for the first time?"

DUKE OF BEAUFORT (*with a smile, lifting his hat*): "Just as it is the first time you have ever hunted, so it is the first time I have ever met any one like you."

On the third day with the Beaufort hounds, my horse fell heavily in a ditch with me and, getting up, galloped away. I was picked up by a good-looking man, who took me into his house, gave me tea and drove me back in his brougham to Easton Grey; I fell passionately in love with him. He

owned a horse called Lardy Dardy, on which he mounted me.

Charty and the others chaffed me much about my new friend, saying that my father would never approve of a Tory and that it was lucky he was married.

I replied, much nettled, that I did not want to marry any one and that, though he was a Tory, he was not at all stupid and would probably get into the Cabinet.

This was my first shrewd political prophecy, for he is in the Cabinet now.

I cannot look at him without remembering that he was the first man I was ever in love with, and that, at the age of seventeen, I said he would be in the Cabinet in spite of his being a Tory.

For pure unalloyed happiness those days at Easton Grey were undoubtedly the most perfect of my life. Lucy's sweetness to me, the beauty of the place, the wild excitement of riding over fences and the perfect certainty I had that I would ride better than any one in the whole world gave me an insolent confidence which no earthquake could have shaken.

Off and on, I felt qualms over my lack of educa-

tion; and when I was falling into a happy sleep, dreaming I was overriding hounds, echoes of "Pray, Mamma" out of Mrs. Markham, or early punishments of unfinished poems would play about my bed.

On one occasion at Easton Grey, unable to sleep for love of life, I leant out of the window into the dark to see if it was thawing. It was a beautiful night, warm and wet, and I forgot all about my education.

The next day, having no mount, I had procured a hireling from a neighbouring farmer, but to my misery the horse did not turn up at the meet; Mr. Golightly, the charming parish priest, said I might drive about in his low black pony-carriage, called in those days a Colorado beetle, but hunting on wheels was no rôle for me and I did not feel like pursuing the field.

My heart sank as I saw the company pass me gaily down the road, preceded by the hounds, trotting with a staccato step and their noses in the air.

Just as I was turning to go home, a groom rode past in mufti, leading a loose horse with a lady's saddle on it. The animal gave a clumsy lurch; and the man, jerking it violently by the head,

bumped it into my phaëton. I saw my chance.

MARGOT: "Hullo, man! . . . That's my horse! Whose groom are you?"

MAN (*rather frightened at being caught jobbing his lady's horse in the mouth*): "I am Mrs. Chaplin's groom, miss."

MARGOT: "Jump off; you are the very man I was looking for; tell me, does Mrs. Chaplin ride this horse over everything?"

MAN (*quite unsuspicious and thawing at my sweetness and authority*): "Bless your soul! Mrs. Chaplin doesn't 'unt this 'orse! It's the Major's! She only 'acked it to the meet."

MARGOT (*apprehensively and her heart sinking*): "But can it jump? . . . Don't they hunt it? . . ."

MAN (*pulling down my habit skirt*): "It's a 'orse that can very near jump anythink, I should say, but the Major says it shakes every tooth in 'is gums and she says it's pig-'eaded."

It did not take me long to mount and in a moment I had left the man miles behind me. Prepared for the worst, but in high glee, I began to look about me: not a sign of the hunt! Only odd remnants of the meet, straggling foot-passengers,

terriers straining at a strap held by drunken runners—some in old Beaufort coats, others in corduroy—one-horse shays of every description by the sides of the road and sloppy girls with stick and tammies standing in gaps of the fences, straining their eyes across the fields to see the hounds.

My horse with a loose rein was trotting aimlessly down the road when, hearing a "Halloa!" I pulled up and saw the hounds streaming towards me all together, so close that you could have covered them with a handkerchief.

What a scent! What a pack! Have I headed the fox? Will they cross the road? No! They are turning away from me! Now's the moment!!

I circled the Chaplin horse round with great resolution and trotted up to a wall at the side of the road; he leapt it like a stag; we flew over the grass and the next fence; and, after a little scrambling, I found myself in the same field with hounds. The horse was as rough as the boy said, but a wonderful hunter; it could not put a foot wrong; we had a great gallop over the walls, which only a few of the field saw.

When hounds checked, I was in despair; all sorts of ladies and gentlemen came riding towards

THE DUKE OF BEAUFORT, MASTER OF THE BEAUFORT HUNT

me and I wondered painfully which of them would be Mr. and which Mrs. Chaplin. What was I to do? Suddenly remembering my new friend and patron, I peered about for the Duke; when I found him and told him of the awkward circumstances in which I had placed myself, he was so much amused that he made my peace with the Chaplins, who begged me to go on riding their horse. They were not less susceptible to dukes than other people and in any case no one was proof against the old Duke of Beaufort. At the end of the day I was given the brush—a fashion completely abandoned in the hunting-field now—and I went home happy and tired.

CHAPTER IV

MARGOT AT A GIRLS' SCHOOL—WHO SPILT THE INK? —THE ENGINE DRIVER'S MISTAKEN FLIRTATION —MARGOT LEAVES SCHOOL IN DISGUST—DECIDES TO GO TO GERMANY TO STUDY

ALTHOUGH I did not do much thinking over my education, others did it for me.

I had been well grounded by a series of short-stayed governesses in the Druids and woad, in Alfred and the cakes, Romulus and Remus and Bruce and the spider. I could speak French well and German a little; and I knew a great deal of every kind of literature from *Tristram Shandy* and *The Antiquary* to *Under Two Flags* and *The Grammarian's Funeral;* but the governesses had been failures and, when Lucy married, my mother decided that Laura and I should go to school.

Mademoiselle de Mennecy—a Frenchwoman of ill-temper and a lively mind—had opened a hyper-refined seminary in Gloucester Crescent, where she undertook to "finish" twelve young ladies. My father had a horror of girls' schools (and if he could

"get through"—to use the orthodox expression of the spookists—he would find all his opinions on this subject more than justified by the manners, morals and learning of the young ladies of the present day) but as it was a question of only a few months he waived his objection.

No. 7 Gloucester Crescent looked down on the Great Western Railway; the lowing of cows, the bleating of sheep and sudden shrill whistles and other odd sounds kept me awake, and my bed rocked and trembled as the vigorous trains passed at uncertain intervals all through the night. This, combined with sticky food, was more than Laura could bear and she had no difficulty in persuading my papa that if she were to stay longer than one week her health would certainly suffer. I was much upset when she left me, but faintly consoled by receiving permission to ride in the Row three times a week; Mlle. de Mennecy thought my beautiful hack gave prestige to her front door and raised no objections.

Sitting alone in the horsehair schoolroom, with a French patent-leather Bible in my hands, surrounded by eleven young ladies, made my heart sink. *"Et le roi David déplut à l' Eternel,"* I heard

in a broad Scotch accent; and for the first time I looked closely at my stable companions.

Mlle. de Mennecy allowed no one to argue with her; and our first little brush took place after she informed me of this fact.

"But in that case, mademoiselle," said I, "how are any of us to learn anything? I don't know how much the others know, but I know nothing except what I've read; so, unless I ask questions, how am I to learn?"

MLLE. DE MENNECY: *"Je ne vous ai jamais défendu de me questionner; vous n'écoutez pas, mademoiselle. J'ai dit qu'il ne fallait pas discuter avec moi."*

MARGOT (*keenly*): "But, mademoiselle, discussion is the only way of making lessons interesting."

MLLE. DE MENNECY (*with violence*): *"Voulez-vous vous taire?"*

To talk to a girl of nearly seventeen in this way was so unintelligent that I made up my mind I would waste neither time nor affection on her.

None of the girls were particularly clever, but we all liked each other and for the first time—and I may safely say the last—I was looked upon as a kind of heroine. It came about in this way: Mlle.

de Mennecy was never wrong. To quote Miss Fowler's admirable saying *à propos* of her father, "She always let us have her own way." If the bottle of ink was upset, or the back of a book burst, she never waited to find out who had done it, but in a torrent of words crashed into the first girl she suspected, her face becoming a silly mauve and her bust heaving with passion. This made me so indignant that, one day when the ink was spilt and Mlle. de Mennecy as usual scolded the wrong girl, I determined I would stand it no longer. Meeting the victim of Mademoiselle's temper in the passage, I said to her:

"But why didn't you say you hadn't done it, ass!"

GIRL (*catching her sob*): "What was the good! She never listens; and I would only have had to tell her who really spilt the ink."

This did seem a little awkward, so I said to her:

"That would never have done! Very well, then, I will go and put the thing right for you, but tell the girls they must back me. She's a senseless woman and I can't think why you are all so frightened of her."

GIRL: "It's all very well for you! Madmozell is a howling snob, you should have heard her on you

before you came! She said your father would very likely be made a peer and your sister Laura marry Sir Charles Dilke." (*The thought of this overrated man marrying Laura was almost more than I could bear, but curiosity kept me silent, and she continued.*) "You see, she is far nicer to you than to us, because she is afraid you may leave her."

Not having thought of this before, I said:

"Is that really true? What a horrible woman! Well, I had better go and square it up; but will you all back me? Now don't go fretting on and making yourself miserable."

GIRL: "I don't so much mind what you call her *flux-de-bouche* scolding, but, when she flounced out of the room, she said I was not to go home this Saturday."

MARGOT: "Oh, that'll be all right. Just you go off." (*Exit girl, drying her eyes.*)

It had never occurred to me that Mlle. de Mennecy was a snob: this knowledge was a great weapon in my hands and I determined upon my plan of action. I hunted about in my room till I found one of my linen overalls, heavily stained with dolly dyes. After putting it on, I went and

knocked at Mlle. de Mennecy's door and opening it said:

"Mademoiselle, I'm afraid you'll be very angry, but it was I who spilt the ink and burst the back of your dictionary. I ought to have told you at once, I know, but I never thought any girl would be such an image as to let you scold her without telling you she had not done it." Seeing a look of suspicion on her sunless face, I added nonchalantly, "Of course, if you think my conduct sets a bad example in your school, I can easily go!"

I observed her eyelids flicker and I said:

"I think, before you scolded Sarah, you might have heard what she had to say."

MLLE. DE MENNECY: *"Ce que vous dites me choque profondément; il m'est difficile de croire que vous avez fait une pareille lâcheté, mademoiselle!"*

MARGOT (*protesting with indignation*): *"Hardly lâcheté,* Mademoiselle! I only knew a few moments ago that you had been so amazingly unjust. Directly I heard it, I came to you; but as I said before, I am quite prepared to leave."

MLLE. DE MENNECY (*feeling her way to a change of front*): *"Sarah s'est conduite si heroïquement que pour le moment je n'insiste plus. Je vous*

félicite, mademoiselle, sur votre franchise; vous pouvez rejoindre vos camarades."

The Lord had delivered her into my hands.

. . . . . .

One afternoon, when our instructress had gone to hear Princess Christian open a bazaar, I was smoking a cigarette on the schoolroom balcony which overlooked the railway line.

It was a beautiful evening, and a wave of depression came over me. Our prettiest pupil, Ethel Brydson, said to me:

"Time is up! We had better go in and do our preparation. There would be the devil to pay if you were caught with that cigarette."

I leant over the balcony blowing smoke into the air in a vain attempt to make rings, but, failing, kissed my hand to the sky and with a parting gesture cursed the school and expressed a vivid desire to go home and leave Gloucester Crescent for ever.

ETHEL (*pulling my dress*): "Good gracious, Margot! Stop kissing your hand! Don't you see that man?"

I looked down and to my intense amusement saw an engine-driver leaning over the side of his tender,

kissing his hand to me. I strained over the balcony and kissed both mine back to him, after which I returned to the school-room.

Our piano was placed in the window and, the next morning, while Ethel was arranging her music preparatory to practising, it appeared my friend the engine-driver began kissing his hand to her. It was eight o'clock and Mlle. de Mennecy was pinning on her twists in the window.

I had finished my toilette and was sitting in the reading-room, learning the passage chosen by our elocution master for the final competition in recitation.

My fingers were in my ears and I was murmuring in dramatic tones:

"Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears, I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him. . . ."

The girls came in and out, but I never noticed them; and when the breakfast bell rang, I shoved the book into my desk and ran downstairs to breakfast. I observed that Ethel's place was empty; none of the girls looked at me, but munched their bread and sipped their tepid tea while Mademoi-

selle made a few frigid general remarks and, after saying a French grace, left the room.

"Well," said I, "what's the row?"

Silence.

MARGOT (*looking from face to face*): "Ah! The *mot d'ordre* is that you are not to speak to me. Is that the idea?"

Silence.

MARGOT (*vehemently, with bitterness*): "This is exactly what I thought would happen at a girls' school—that I should find myself boycotted and betrayed."

FIRST GIRL (*bursting out*): "Oh, Margot, it's not that at all! It's because Ethel won't betray you that we are all to be punished to-day!"

MARGOT: "What! Collective punishment? And I am the only one to get off? How priceless! Well, I must say this is Mlle. de Mennecy's first act of justice. I've been so often punished for all of you that I'm sure you won't mind standing me this little outing! Where is Ethel? Why don't you answer? (*Very slowly*) Oh, all right! I have done with you! And I shall leave this very day, so help me God!"

On hearing that Mlle. de Mennecy had dismissed

Ethel on the spot because the engine-driver had kissed his hand to her, I went immediately and told her the whole story; all she answered was that I was such a liar she did not believe a word I said.

I assured her that I was painfully truthful by nature, but her circular and senseless punishments had so frightened the girls that lying had become the custom of the place and I felt in honour bound to take my turn in the lies and the punishments. After which I left the room and the school.

On my arrival in Grosvenor Square I told my parents that I must go home to Glen, as I felt suffocated by the pettiness and conventionality of my late experience. The moderate teaching and general atmosphere of Gloucester Crescent had depressed me, and London feels airless when one is out of spirits: in any case it can never be quite a home to any one born in Scotland.

. . . . . .

The only place I look upon as home which does not belong to me is Archerfield*—a house near North Berwick, in which we lived for seven years. After Glen and my cottage in Berkshire, Archerfield is the place I love best in the world. I was

*Archerfield belonged to Mrs. Hamilton Ogilvie, of Beale.

both happier and more miserable there than I have ever been in my life. Just as William James has written on varieties of religious experience, so I could write on the varieties of my moral and domestic experiences at that wonderful place. If ever I were to be as unhappy again as I was there, I would fly to the shelter of those Rackham woods, seek isolation on those curving coasts where the gulls shriek and dive and be ultimately healed by the beauty of the anchored seas which bear their islands like the Christ Child on their breasts.

Unfortunately for me, my father had business which kept him in London. He was in treaty with Lord Gerard to buy his uninteresting house in an uninteresting square. The only thing that pleased me in Grosvenor Square was the iron gate. When I could not find the key of the square and wanted to sit out with my admirers, after leaving a ball early, I was in the habit of climbing over these gates in my tulle dress. This was a feat which was attended by more than one risk: if you did not give a prominent leap off the narrow space from the top of the gate, you would very likely be caught up by the tulle fountain of your dress, in which case you might easily lose your life; or, if you did not

keep your eye on the time, you would very likely be caught by an early house-maid, in which case you might easily lose your reputation. No one is a good judge of her own reputation, but I like to think that those iron gates were the silent witnesses of my milder manner.

My father, however, loved Grosvenor Square and, being anxious that Laura and I should come out together, bought the house in 1881.

No prodigal was ever given a warmer welcome than I was when I left the area of the Great Western Railway; but the problem of how to finish my education remained and I was determined that I would not make my début till I was eighteen. What with reading, hunting and falling in love at Easton Grey, I was not at all happy and wanted to be alone.

I knew no girls and had no friends except my sisters and was not eager to talk to them about my affairs; I never could at any time put all of myself into discussion which degenerates into gossip. I had not formed the dangerous habit of writing good letters about myself, dramatizing the principal part. I shrank then, as I do now, from exposing the secrets and sensations of life. Reticence should

guard the soul and only those who have compassion should be admitted to the shrine. When I peer among my dead or survey my living friends, I see hardly any one with this quality. For the moment my cousin Nan Tennant, Mrs. Arthur Sassoon, Mrs. James Rothschild, Antoine Bibesco, and my son and husband are the only people I can think of who possess it.

John Morley has, in carved letters of stone upon his chimney-piece, Bacon's fine words, "The nobler a soul, the more objects of compassion it hath."

When I first read them, I wondered where I could meet those souls and I have wondered ever since. To have compassion you need courage, you must fight for the objects of your pity and you must feel and express tenderness towards all men. You will not meet disinterested emotion, though you may seek it all your life, and you will seldom find enough pity for the pathos of life.

My husband is a man of disinterested emotion. One morning, when he and I were in Paris, where we had gone for a holiday, I found him sitting with his head in his hands and the newspaper on his knee. I saw he was deeply moved and, full of apprehension, I put my arm round him and asked if he had

had bad news. He pointed to a paragraph in the paper and I read how some of the Eton boys had had to break the bars of their windows to escape from fire and others had been burnt to death. We knew neither a boy nor the parent of any boy at Eton at that time, but Henry's eyes were full of tears, and he could not speak.

I had the same experience with him over the wreck of the *Titanic*. When we read of that challenging, luxurious ship at bay in the ice-fields and the captain sending his unanswered signals to the stars, we could not sit through dinner.

I knew no one of this kind of sympathy in my youth, and my father was too busy and my mother too detached for me to have told them anything. I wanted to be alone and I wanted to learn. After endless talks it was decided that I should go to Germany for four or five months and thus settle the problem of an unbegun but finishing education.

Looking back on this decision, I think it was a remarkable one. I had a passion for dancing and my father wanted me to go to balls; I had a genius for horses and adored hunting; I had such a wonderful hack that every one collected at the Park rails when they saw me coming into the Row; but

all this did not deflect me from my purpose and I went to Dresden alone with a stupid maid at a time when—if not in England, certainly in Germany—I might have passed as a moderate beauty.

CHAPTER V

A DRESDEN LODGING HOUSE—MIDNIGHT ADVENTURE WITH AN OFFICER AFTER THE OPERA—AN ELDERLY AMERICAN ADMIRER—YELLOW ROSES, GRAF VON—VON—AND MOTIFS FROM WAGNER

FRAU VON MACH kept a ginger-coloured lodging-house high up in Lüttichau-strasse. She was a woman of culture and refinement; her mother had been English and her husband, having gone mad in the Franco-Prussian war, had left her penniless with three children. She had to work for her living and she cooked and scrubbed without a thought for herself from dawn till dark.

There were thirteen pianos on our floor and two or three permanent lodgers. The rest of the people came and went—men, women and boys of every nationality, professionals and amateurs—but I was too busy to care or notice who went or who came.

Although my mother was bold and right to let me go as a bachelor to Dresden, I could not have done it myself. Later on, like every one else, I sent

my stepdaughter and daughter to be educated in Germany for a short time, but they were chaperoned by a woman of worth and character, who never left them: my German nursery-governess, who came to me when Elizabeth was four.

In parenthesis, I may mention that, in the early terrible days of the war, our thoughtful Press, wishing to make money out of public hysteria, had the bright idea of turning this simple, devoted woman into a spy. There was not a pressman who did not laugh in his sleeve at this and openly make a stunt of it, but it had its political uses; and, after the Russians had been seen with snow on their boots by everyone in England, the gentlemen of the Press calculated that almost anything would be believed if it could be repeated often enough. And they were right: the spiteful and the silly disseminated lies about our governess from door to door with the kind of venom that belongs in equal proportions to the credulous, the cowards and the cranks. The greenhorns believed it and the funkers, who saw a plentiful crop of spies in every bush, found no difficulty in mobilising their terrors from my governess—already languishing in the Tower of London—to myself, who suddenly became a tennis-

champion and an *habituée* of the German officers' camps!

The Dresden of my day was different from the Dresden of twenty years after. I never saw an English person the whole time I was there. After settling into my new rooms, I wrote out for myself a severe *Stundenplan,* which I pinned over my head next to my alarm-clock. At 6 every morning I woke up and dashed into the kitchen to have coffee with the solitary slavey; after that I practised the fiddle or piano till 8.30, when we had the pension breakfast; and the rest of the day was taken up by literature, drawing and other lessons. I went to concerts or the opera by myself every night.

One day Frau von Mach came to me greatly distressed by a letter she had received from my mother begging her to take in no men lodgers while I was in the pension, as some of her friends in England had told her that I might elope with a foreigner. To this hour I do not know whether my mother was serious; but I wrote and told her that Frau von Mach's life depended on her lodgers, that there was only one permanent lodger—an old American called Loring, who never spoke to me—and that I had no time to elope. Many and futile were the

efforts to make me return home; but, though I wrote to England regularly, I never alluded to any of them, as they appeared childish to me.

I made great friends with Frau von Mach and in loose moments sat on her kitchen-table smoking cigarettes and eating black cherries; we discussed Shakespeare, Wagner, Brahms, *Middlemarch,* Bach and Hegel, and the time flew.

One night I arrived early at the Opera House and was looking about while the fiddles were tuning up. I wore my pearls and a scarlet *crêpe-de-chine* dress and a black cloth cape with a hood on it, which I put on over my head when I walked home in the rain. I was having a frank stare at the audience, when I observed just opposite me an officer in a white uniform. As the Saxon soldiers wore pale blue, I wondered what army he could belong to.

He was a fine-looking young man, with tailor-made shoulders, a small waist and silver and black on his sword-belt. When he turned to the stage, I looked at him through my opera-glasses. On closer inspection, he was even handsomer than I had thought. A lady joined him in the box and he took off her cloak, while she stood up gazing down at the stalls, pulling up her long black gloves. She

wore a row of huge pearls, which fell below her waist, and a black jet *décolleté dress*. Few people wore low dresses at the opera and I saw half the audience fixing her with their glasses. She was evidently famous. Her hair was fox-red and pinned back on each side of her temples with Spanish combs of gold and pearls; she surveyed the stalls with cavernous eyes set in a snow-white face; and in her hand she held a bouquet of lilac orchids. She was the best-looking woman I saw all the time I was in Germany and I could not take my eyes off her. The white officer began to look about the opera-house when my red dress caught his eye. He put up his glasses, and I instantly put mine down. Although the lights were lowered for the overture, I saw him looking at me for some time.

I had been in the habit of walking about in the *entr'actes* and, when the curtain dropped at the end of the first act, I left the box. It did not take me long to identify the white officer. He was not accompanied by his lady, but stood leaning against the wall smoking a cigar and talking to a man; as I passed him I had to stop for a moment for fear of treading on his outstretched toes. He pulled

himself erect to get out of my way; I looked up and our eyes met; I don't think I blush easily, but something in his gaze may have made me blush. I lowered my eyelids and walked on.

The *Meistersinger* was my favourite opera and so it appeared to be of the Dresdeners; Wagner, having quarrelled with the authorities, refused to allow the *Ring* to be played in the Dresden Opera House; and every one was tired of the swans and doves of *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser*.

There was a great crowd that night and, as it was raining when we came out, I hung about, hoping to get a cab; I saw my white officer with his lady, but he did not see me; I heard him before he got into the brougham give elaborate orders to the coachman to put him down at some club.

After waiting for some time, as no cab turned up, I pulled the hood of my cloak over my head and started to walk home; when the crowd scattered I found myself alone and I turned into a little street which led into Lüttichau-strasse. Suddenly I became aware that I was being followed; I heard the even steps and the click of spurs of some one walking behind me; I should not have noticed this had I not halted under a lamp to pull

on my hood, which the wind had blown off. When I stopped, the steps also stopped. I walked on, wondering if it had been my imagination, and again I heard the click of spurs coming nearer. The street being deserted, I was unable to endure it any longer; I turned round and there was the officer. His black cloak hanging loosely over his shoulders showed me the white uniform and silver belt. He saluted me and asked me in a curious Belgian French if he might accompany me home. I said:

"Oh, certainly! But I am not at all nervous in the dark."

OFFICER *(stopping under the lamp to light a cigarette)*: "You like Wagner? Do you know him well? I confess I find him long and loud."

MARGOT: "He is a little long, but so wonderful!"

OFFICER: "Don't you feel tired? *(With emphasis) I do!"*

MARGOT: "No, I'm not at all tired."

OFFICER: "You would not like to go and have supper with me in a private room in a hotel, would you?"

MARGOT: "You are very kind, but I don't like supper; besides, it is late. *(Leaving his side to look*

at the number on the door) I am afraid we must part here."

Officer (*drawing a long breath*): "But you said I might take you home!!"

Margot *(with a slow smile)*: "I know I did, but this is my home."

He looked disappointed and surprised, but taking my hand he kissed it, then stepping back saluted and said:

"Pardonnez-moi, mademoiselle."

. . . . . .

My second adventure occurred on my way back to England. After a little correspondence, my mother allowed me to take Frau von Mach with me to Berlin to hear the *Ring der Nibelungen.* She and I were much excited at this little outing, in honour of which I had ordered her a new black satin dress. German taste is like German figures, thick and clumsy, and my dear old friend looked like a hold-all in my gift.

When we arrived in Berlin I found my room in the hotel full of every kind of flower; and on one of the bouquets was placed the card of our permanent lodger, Mr. Loring. I called out to Frau von Mach, who was unpacking:

"Do come here, dearest, and look at my wonderful roses! You will never guess who they come from!"

Frau von Mach *(looking rather guilty)*: "I think I can guess."

Margot: "I see you know! But who would have dreamt that an old maid like Loring would have thought of such gallantry?"

Frau von Mach: "But surely, dear child, you knew that he admired you?"

Margot: "Admired me! You must be cracked! I never remember his saying a civil word to me the whole time I was in Dresden. Poor mamma! If she were here now she would feel that her letter to you on the danger of my elopement was amply justified!"

Frau von Mach and I sat side by side at the opera; and on my left was a German officer. In front of us there was a lady with beautiful hair and diamond grasshoppers in it; her two daughters sat on either side of her.

Everything was conducted in the dark and it was evident that the audience was strung up to a high pitch of expectant emotion, for, when I whispered to Frau von Mach, the officer on my left said,

"Hush!" which I thought extremely rude. Several men in the stalls, sitting on the nape of their necks, had covered their faces with pocket-handkerchiefs, which I thought infinitely ridiculous, bursting as they were with beef and beer. My musical left was only a little less good-looking than the white officer. He kept a rigid profile towards me and squashed up into a corner to avoid sharing an arm of the stall with me. As we had to sit next to each other for four nights running, I found this a little exaggerated.

I was angry with myself for dropping my fan and scent-bottle; the lady picked up the bottle and the officer the fan. The lady gave me back my bottle and, when the curtain fell, began talking to me.

She had turned round once or twice during the scene to look at me. I found her most intelligent; she knew England and had heard Rubinstein and Joachim play at the Monday Pops. She had been to the Tower of London, Madame Tussaud's and Lord's.

The officer kept my fan in his hands and, instead of going out in the *entr'acte,* stayed and listened to our conversation. When the curtain went up and

the people returned to their seats, he still held my fan. In the next interval the lady and the girls went out and my left-hand neighbour opened conversation with me. He said in perfect English:

"Are you really as fond of this music as you appear to be?"

To which I replied:

"You imply I am humbugging! I never pretend anything; why should you think I do? I don't lean back perspiring or cover my face with a handkerchief as your compatriots are doing, it is true, but . . ."

He *(interrupting)*: "I am very glad of that! Do you think you would recognise a *motif* if I wrote one for you?"

Feeling rather nettled, I said:

"You must think me a perfect gowk if you suppose I should not recognise any *motif* in any opera of Wagner!"

I said this with a commanding gesture, but I was far from confident that he would not catch me out. He opened his cigarette-case, took out a visiting card and wrote the *Schlummermotif* on the back before giving it to me. After telling him

what the *motif* was, I looked at his very long name on the back of the card: Graf von—.

Seeing me do this, he said with a slight twinkle: "Won't you write me a *motif* now?"

MARGOT: "Alas! I can't write music and to save my life could not do what you have done; are you a composer?"

GRAF VON—: "I shan't tell you what I am—especially as I have given you my name—till you tell me who you are."

MARGOT: "I'm a young lady at large!"

At this, Frau von Mach nudged me; I thought she wanted to be introduced, so I looked at his name and said seriously:

"Graf von—, this is my friend Frau von Mach."

He instantly stood up, bent his head and, clicking his heels, said to her:

"Will you please introduce me to this young lady?"

FRAU VON MACH *(with a smile)*: "Certainly. Miss Margot Tennant."

GRAF VON—: "I hope, mademoiselle, you will forgive me thinking your interest in Wagner might not be as great as it appeared, but it enabled me to introduce myself to you."

MARGOT: "Don't apologise, you have done me a good turn, for I shall lie back and cover my face with a handkerchief all through this next act to convince you."

GRAF VON—: "That would be a heavy punishment for me . . . and incidentally for this ugly audience."

On the last night of the *Ring,* I took infinite trouble with my toilette. When we arrived at the theatre neither the lady, her girls, nor the Graf were there. I found an immense bouquet on my seat, of yellow roses with thick clusters of violets round the stalk, the whole thing tied up with wide Parma violet ribbons. It was a wonderful bouquet. I buried my face in the roses, wondering why the Graf was so late, fervently hoping that the lady and her daughters would not turn up: no Englishman would have thought of giving one flowers in this way, said I to myself. The curtain! How very tiresome! The doors would all be shut now, as late-comers were not allowed to disturb the *Götterdämmerung.* The next day I was to travel home, which depressed me; my life would be different in London and all my lessons were over for ever! What could have happened to the Graf,

the lady and her daughters? Before the curtain rose for the last act, he arrived and, flinging off his cloak, said breathlessly to me:

"You can't imagine how furious I am! To-night of all nights we had a regimental dinner! I asked my colonel to let me slip off early, or I should not be here now; I had to say good-bye to you. Is it true then? Are you really off to-morrow?"

MARGOT *(pressing the bouquet to her face, leaning faintly towards him and looking into his eyes)*: "Alas, yes! I will send you something from England so that you mayn't quite forget me. I won't lean back and cover my head with a handkerchief to-night, but if I hide my face in these divine roses now and then, you will forgive me and understand."

He said nothing but looked a little perplexed. We had not observed the curtain rise but were rudely reminded of it by a lot of angry "Hush's" all round us. He clasped his hands together under his chin, bending his head down on them and taking up both arms of the stall with his elbows. When I whispered to him, he did not turn his head at all but just cocked his ear down to me. Was he pretending to be more interested in Wagner than he really was?"

I buried my face in my roses, the curtain dropped. It was all over.

Graf von—*(turning to me and looking straight into my eyes)*: "If it is true what you said, that you know no one in Berlin, what a wonderful compliment the lady with the diamond grasshoppers has paid you!"

He took my bouquet, smelt the roses and, giving it back to me with a sigh, said:

"Good-bye."

CHAPTER VI

MARGOT RIDES A HORSE INTO LONDON HOME AND SMASHES FURNITURE—SUITOR IS FORBIDDEN THE HOUSE—ADVISES GIRL FRIEND TO ELOPE; INTERVIEW WITH GIRL'S FATHER—TÊTE-À-TÊTE DINNER IN PARIS WITH BARON HIRSCH—WINNING TIP FROM FRED ARCHER, THE JOCKEY

WHEN I first came out in London we had no friends of fashion to get me invitations to balls and parties. The Walters, who were my mother's rich relations, in consequence of a family quarrel were not on speaking terms with us; and my prospects looked by no means rosy.

One day I was lunching with an American to whom I had been introduced in the hunting-field and found myself sitting next to a stranger. Hearing that he was Arthur Walter, I thought that it would be fun to find out his views upon my family and his own. He did not know who I was, so I determined I would enjoy what looked like being a long meal. We opened in this manner:

MARGOT: "I see you hate Gladstone!"

ARTHUR WALTER: "Not at all. I hate his politics."

MARGOT: "I didn't suppose you hated the man."

ARTHUR WALTER: "I am ashamed to say I have never even seen him or heard him speak, but I entirely agree that for the Duke of Westminster to have sold the Millais portrait of him merely because he does not approve of Home Rule shows great pettiness! I have of course never seen the picture as it was bought privately."

MARGOT: "The Tennants bought it, so I suppose you could easily see it."

ARTHUR WALTER: "I regret to say that I cannot ever see this picture."

MARGOT: "Why not?"

ARTHUR WALTER: "Because though the Tennants are relations of mine, our family quarrelled."

MARGOT: "What did they quarrel over?"

ARTHUR WALTER: "Oh, it's a long story! Perhaps relations quarrel because they are too much alike."

MARGOT: "You are not in the least like the Tennants!"

ARTHUR WALTER: "What makes you say that? Do you know them?"

MARGOT: "Yes, I do."

ARTHUR WALTER: "In that case perhaps you could take me to see the picture."

MARGOT: "Oh, certainly! . . . And I know Mr. Gladstone too!"

ARTHUR WALTER: "What a fortunate young lady! Perhaps you could manage to take me to see him also."

MARGOT: "All right. If you will let me drive you away from lunch in my phaeton, I will show you the Gladstone picture."

ARTHUR WALTER: "Are you serious? Do you know them well enough?"

MARGOT (*nodding confidently*): "Yes, yes, don't you fret!"

After lunch I drove him to 40 Grosvenor Square and, when I let myself in with my latch-key, he guessed who I was, but any interest he might have felt in this discovery was swamped by what followed.

I opened the library door. Mr. Gladstone was sitting talking to my parents under his own portrait. After the introduction he conversed with interest and courtesy to my new relation about the

Times newspaper, its founder and its great editor, Delane.

. . . . . .

What I really enjoyed most in London was riding in the Row. I bought a beautiful hack for myself at Tattersalls, 15.2, bright bay with black points and so well-balanced that if I had ridden it with my face to its tail I should hardly have known the difference. I called it Tatts; it was bold as a lion, vain as a peacock and extremely moody. One day, when I was mounted to ride in the Row, my papa kept me waiting so long at the door of 40 Grosvenor Square that I thought I would ride Tatts into the front hall and give him a call; it only meant going up one step from the pavement to the porch and another through the double doors held open by the footman. Unluckily, after a somewhat cautious approach by Tatts up the last step into the marble hall, he caught his reflection in a mirror. At this he instantly stood erect upon his hind legs, crashing my tall hat into the crystal chandelier. His four legs all gave way on the polished floor and down we went with a noise like thunder, the pony on the top of me, the chandelier on the top of him and my father and the footman helpless

spectators. I was up and on Tatts' head in a moment, but not before he had kicked a fine old English chest into a jelly. This misadventure upset my father's temper and my pony's nerve, as well as preventing me from dancing for several days.

. . . . . .

My second scrape was more serious. I engaged myself to be married.

If any young "miss" reads this autobiography and wants a little advice from a very old hand, I will say to her, when a man threatens to commit suicide after you have refused him, you may be quite sure that he is a vain, petty fellow or a great goose; if you felt any doubts about your decision before, you need have none after this and under no circumstances must you give way. To marry a man out of pity is folly; and, if you think you are going to influence the kind of fellow who has "never had a chance, poor devil," you are profoundly mistaken. One can only influence the strong characters in life, not the weak; and it is the height of vanity to suppose that you can make an honest man of any one. My *fiancé* was neither petty nor a goose, but a humorist; I do not think he meant

me to take him seriously, but in spite of my high spirits I was very serious, and he was certainly more in love with me than any one had ever been before. He was a fine rider and gave me a mount with the Beaufort hounds.

When I told my mother of my engagement, she sank upon a settee, put a handkerchief to her eyes, and said:

"You might as well marry your groom!"

I struggled very hard to show her how worldly she was. Who wanted money? Who wanted position? Who wanted brains? Nothing in fact was wanted, except my will!

I was much surprised, a few days later, to hear from G., whom I met riding in the Row, that he had called every day of the week but been told by the footman that I was out. The under-butler, who was devoted to me, said sadly, when I complained:

"I am afraid, miss, your young gentleman has been forbidden the house."

Forbidden the house! I rushed to my sister Charty and found her even more upset than my mother. She pointed out with some truth that Lucy's marriage and the obstinacy with which she

had pursued it had gone far towards spoiling her early life; but "the squire," as Graham Smith was called, although a character-part, was a man of perfect education and charming manners. He had beaten all the boys at Harrow, won a hundred steeplechases and loved books; whereas my young man knew little about anything but horses and, she added, would be no companion to me when I was ill or old.

I flounced about the room and said that forbidding him the house was grotesque and made me ridiculous in the eyes of the servants. I ended a passionate protest by telling her gravely that if I changed my mind he would undoubtedly commit suicide. This awful news was received with an hilarity which nettled me.

CHARTY: "I should have thought you had too much sense of humour and Mr. G. too much common sense for either of you to believe this. He must think you very vain. . . ."

I did not know at all what she meant and said with the utmost gravity:

"The terrible thing is I believe that I have given him a false impression of my feelings for him; for, though I love him very much, I would never have

promised to marry him if he had not said he was going to kill himself." Clasping my two hands together and greatly moved, I concluded, "If I break it off now and *anything should* happen, my life is over and I shall feel as if I had murdered him."

CHARTY (*looking at me with a tender smile*): "I should risk it, darling."

. . . . . .

A propos of vanity, in the interests of my publisher I must here digress and relate the two greatest compliments that I ever had paid to me. Although I cannot listen to reading out loud, I have always been fond of sermons and constantly went to hear Canon Eyton, a great preacher, who collected large and attentive congregations in his church in Sloane Street. I nearly always went alone, as my family preferred listening to Stopford Brooke or going to our pew in St. George's, Hanover Square.

One of my earliest recollections is of my mother and father taking me to hear Liddon preach; I remember nothing at all about it except that I swallowed a hook and eye during the service: not a very flattering tribute to the great divine!

Eyton was a striking preacher and his church was always crowded. I had to stand a long time before I could ever get a seat. One morning I received this letter:

DEAR MISS TENNANT,

I hope you will excuse this written by a stranger. I have often observed you listening to the sermon in our church. My wife and I are going abroad, so we offer you our pew; you appear to admire Eyton's preaching as much as we do—we shall be very glad if you can use it.

Yours truly,
FRANCIS BUXTON.

The other compliment was also a letter from a stranger. It was dirty and misspelt, and enclosed a bill from an undertaker; the bill came to seven pounds and the letter ran as follows:

Honoured Miss father passed away quite peaceful last Saturday, he set store by his funeral and often told us as much sweeping a crossing had paid him pretty regular, but he left nothing as one might speak of, and so we was put to it for the funeral, as it throws back so on a house not to bury your father proper, I remember you and all he thought of you and told the undertaker to go ahead with the thing for as you was my fathers friend I hoped you would understand and excuse me.

This was from the son of our one-legged crossing-sweeper, and I need hardly say I owed him a great

deal more than seven pounds. He had taken all our love-letters, presents and messages to and fro from morning till night for years past and was a man who thoroughly understood life.

. . . . . .

To return to my *fiancé,* I knew things could not go on as they were; scenes bored me and I was quite incapable of sustaining a campaign of white lies; so I reassured my friends and relieved my relations by telling the young man that I could not marry him. He gave me his beautiful mare, Molly Bawn, sold all his hunters and went to Australia. His hair when he returned to England two years later was grey. I have heard of this happening, but have only known of it twice in my life, once on this occasion and the other time when the boiler of the *Thunderer* burst in her trial trip; the engine was the first Government order ever given to my father's firm of Humphreys & Tennant and the accident made a great sensation. My father told me that several men had been killed and that young Humphreys' hair had turned white. I remember this incident very well, as when I gave Papa the telegram in the billiard room at Glen he covered his face with his hands and sank on the sofa in tears.

About this time Sir William Miller, a friend of the family, suggested to my parents that his eldest son—a charming young fellow, since dead—should marry me. I doubt if the young man knew me by sight, but in spite of this we were invited to stay at Manderston, much to my father's delight.

On the evening of our arrival my host said to me in his broad Scottish accent:

"Margy, will you marry my son Jim?"

"My dear Sir William," I replied, "your son Jim has never spoken to me in his life!"

SIR WILLIAM: "He is shy."

I assured him that this was not so and that I thought his son might be allowed to choose for himself, adding:

"You are like my father, Sir William, and think every one wants to marry."

SIR WILLIAM: "So they do, don't they?" (*With a sly look.*) "I am sure they all want to marry you."

MARGOT (*mischievously*): "I wonder!"

SIR WILLIAM: "Margy, would you rather marry me or break your leg?"

MARGOT: Break both, Sir William."

After this promising beginning I was introduced

to the young man. It was impossible to pay me less attention than he did.

Sir William had two daughters, one of whom was anxious to marry a major quartered in Edinburgh, but he was robustly and rudely against this, in consequence of which the girl was unhappy. She took me into her confidence one afternoon in their schoolroom.

It was dark and the door was half open, with a bright light in the passage; Miss Miller was telling me with simple sincerity exactly what she felt and what her father felt about the major. I suddenly observed Sir William listening to our conversation behind the hinges of the door. Being an enormous man, he had screwed himself into a cramped posture and I was curious to see how long he would stick it out. It was *indiqué* that I should bring home the proverbial platitude that "listeners never hear any good of themselves."

Miss Miller: "You see, there is only one real objection to him, he is not rich!"

I told her that as she would be rich some day, it did not matter. Why should the rich marry the rich? It was grotesque! I intended to marry what-

ever kind of man I cared for and papa would certainly find the money.

MISS MILLER (*not listening*): "He loves me so! And he says he will kill himself if I give him up now."

MARGOT (*with vigour*): "Oh, if he is *that* sort of man, a really brave fellow, there is only one thing for you both to do!"

MISS MILLER (*leaning forward with hands clasped and looking at me earnestly*): "Oh, tell me, tell me!"

MARGOT: "Are you sure he is a man of dash? Is he really unworldly and devoted? Not afraid of what people say?"

MISS MILLER (*eagerly*): "No, no! Yes, yes! He would die for me, indeed he would, and is afraid of no one!"

MARGOT (*luring her on*): "I expect he is very much afraid of your father."

MISS MILLER (*hesitating*): "Papa is so rude to him."

MARGOT (*with scorn*): "Well, if your major is afraid of your father, I think nothing of him!" (*Slight movement behind the door.*)

MISS MILLER (*impulsively*): "He is afraid of no one! But Papa never talks to him."

MARGOT (*very deliberately*): "Well, there is only one thing for you to do; and that is to run away!" (*Sensation behind the door.*)

MISS MILLER (*with determination, her eyes sparkling*): "If he will do it, I *will!* But oh, dear! . . . What will people say? How they will talk!"

MARGOT (*lightly*): "Oh, of course, if you care for what people say, you will be done all through life!"

MISS MILLER: "Papa would be furious, you know, and would curse fearfully!"

To this I answered:

"I know your father well and I don't believe he would care a damn!"

I got up suddenly, as if going to the door, at which there was a sound of a scuffle in the corridor.

MISS MILLER (*alarmed and getting up*): "What was that noise? Can any one have been in the passage? Could they have heard us? Let us shut the door."

MARGOT: "No, don't shut the door, it's so hot and we shan't be able to talk alone again."

MISS MILLER (*relieved and sitting down*): "You are very good. . . . I must think carefully over what you have said."

MARGOT: "Anyhow, tell your major that *I* know your father; he is really fond of me."

MISS MILLER: "Oh, yes, I heard him ask your father if he would exchange you for us."

MARGOT: "That's only his chaff; he is devoted to you. But what he likes about me is my dash: nothing your papa admires so much as courage. If the major has pluck enough to carry you off to Edinburgh, marry you in a registrar's office and come back and tell your family the same day, he will forgive everything, give you a glorious allowance and you'll be happy ever after! . . . Now, my dear, I must go."

I got up very slowly, and, putting my hands on her shoulders, said:

"Pull up your socks, Amy!"

I need hardly say the passage was deserted when I opened the door. I went downstairs, took up the *Scotsman* and found Sir William writing in the hall. He was grumpy and restless and at last, putting down his pen, he came up to me and said, in his broad Scotch accent:

"Margy, will you go round the garden with me?"

"MARGY": "Yes, if we can sit down alone and have a good talk."

SIR WILLIAM (*delighted*): "What about the summerhouse?"

"MARGY": "All right, I'll run up and put on my hat and meet you here."

When we got to the summer-house he said:

"Margy, my daughter Amy's in love with a pauper."

"MARGY": "What does that matter?"

SIR WILLIAM: "He's not at all clever."

"MARGY": "How do you know?"

SIR WILLIAM: "What do you mean?"

"MARGY": "None of us are good judges of the people we dislike."

SIR WILLIAM (*cautiously*): "I would much like your advice on all this affair and I want you to have a word with my girl Amy and tell her just what you think on the matter."

"MARGY": "I have."

SIR WILLIAM: "What did she say to you?"

"MARGY": "Really, Sir William, would you have me betray confidences?"

SIR WILLIAM: "Surely you can tell me what *you* said, anyway, without betraying her."

"MARGY" (*looking at him steadily*): "Well, what do you suppose you would say in the circumstances? If a well-brought-up girl told you that she was in love with a man that her parents disliked, a man who was unable to keep her and with no prospects . . ."

SIR WILLIAM (*interrupting*): "Never mind what I should say! What did *you* say?"

"MARGY" (*evasively*): "The thing is unthinkable! Good girls like yours could never go against their parents' wishes! Men who can't keep their wives should not marry at all. . . ."

SIR WILLIAM (*with great violence, seizing my hands*): *"What did you say?"*

"MARGY" (*with a sweet smile*): "I'm afraid, Sir William, you are changing your mind and, instead of leaning on my advice, you begin to suspect it."

SIR WILLIAM (*very loud and beside himself with rage*): *"WHAT DID YOU SAY?"*

"MARGY" (*coolly, putting her hand on his*): "I can't think why you are so excited! If I told you that I had said, 'Give it all up, my dear, and don't vex your aged father,' what would you say?"

MARGOT ASQUITH'S TWO CHILDREN, ANTHONY AND ELIZABETH (PRINCESS BIBESCO)

SIR WILLIAM (*getting up and flinging my hand away from him*): "Hoots! You're a liar!"

"MARGY": "No, I'm not, Sir William; but, when I see people listening at doors, I give them a run for their money."

. . . . . .

I had another vicarious proposal. One night, dining with the Bischoffheims, I was introduced for the first time to Baron Hirsch, an Austrian who lived in Paris. He took me in to dinner and a young man whom I had met out hunting sat on the other side of me.

I was listening impressively to the latter, holding my champagne in my hand, when the footman in serving one of the dishes bumped my glass against my chest and all its contents went down the front of my ball-dress. I felt iced to the bone; but, as I was thin, I prayed profoundly that my pink bodice would escape being marked. I continued in the same position, holding my empty glass in my hand as if nothing had happened, hoping that no one had observed me and trying to appear interested in the young man's description of the awful dangers he had run when finding himself alone with hounds.

A few minutes later Baron Hirsch turned to me and said:

"Aren't you very cold?"

I said that I was, but that it did not matter; what I really minded was spoiling my dress and, as I was not a kangaroo, I feared the worst. After this we entered into conversation and he told me among other things that, when he had been pilled for a sporting club in Paris, he had revenged himself by buying the club and the site upon which it was built, to which I observed:

"You must be very rich."

He asked me where I had lived and seemed surprised that I had never heard of him.

The next time we met each other was in Paris. I lunched with him and his wife and he gave me his opera box and mounted me in the Bois de Boulogne.

One day he invited me to dine with him *tête-à-tête* at the Café Anglais and, as my father and mother were out, I accepted. I felt a certain curiosity about this invitation, because my host in his letter had given me the choice of several other dates in the event of my being engaged that night. When I arrived at the Café Anglais Baron Hirsch took off

my cloak and conducted me into a private room. He reminded me of our first meeting, said that he had been much struck by my self-control over the iced champagne and went on to ask if I knew why he had invited me to dine with him. I said:

"I have not the slightest idea!"

BARON HIRSCH: "Because I want you to marry my son, Lucien. He is quite unlike me, he is very respectable and hates money; he likes books and collects manuscripts and other things, and is highly educated."

MARGOT: "Your son is the man with the beard, who wears glasses and collects coins, isn't he?"

BARON HIRSCH (*thinking my description rather dreary*): "Quite so! You talked to him the other day at our house. But he has a charming disposition and has been a good son; and I am quite sure that, if you would take a little trouble, he would be devoted to you and make you an excellent husband: he does not like society, or racing, or any of the things that I care for."

MARGOT: "Poor man! I don't suppose he would even care much for me! I hate coins!"

BARON HIRSCH: "Oh, but you would widen his interests! He is shy and I want him to make a

good marriage; and above all he must marry an Englishwoman."

MARGOT: "Has he ever been in love?"

BARON HIRSCH: "No, he has never been in love; but a lot of women make up to him and I don't want him to be married for his money by some designing girl."

MARGOT: "Over here I suppose that sort of thing might happen; I don't believe it would in England."

BARON HIRSCH: "How can you say such a thing to me? London society cares more for money than any other in the world, as I know to my cost! You may take it from me that a young man who will be as rich as Lucien can marry almost any girl he likes."

MARGOT: "I doubt it! English girls don't marry for money!"

BARON HIRSCH: "Nonsense, my dear! They are like other people; it is only the young that can afford to despise money!"

MARGOT: "Then I hope that I shall be young for a very long time."

BARON HIRSCH (*smiling*): "I don't think you will ever be disappointed in that hope; but surely

you wouldn't like to be a poor man's wife and live in the suburbs? Just think what it would be if you could not hunt or ride in the Row in a beautiful habit or have wonderful dresses from Worth! You would hate to be dowdy and obscure!"

"That," I answered energetically, "could never happen to me."

BARON HIRSCH: "Why not?"

MARGOT: "Because I have too many friends."

BARON HIRSCH: "And enemies?"

MARGOT (*thoughtfully*): "Perhaps. . . . I don't know about that. I never notice whether people dislike me or not. After all, you took a fancy to me the first time we met; why should not other people do the same? Do you think I should not improve on acquaintance?"

BARON HIRSCH: "How can you doubt that, when I have just asked you to marry my son?"

MARGOT: "What other English girl is there that you would like for a daughter-in-law?"

BARON HIRSCH: "Lady Katie Lambton,* Durham's sister."

MARGOT: "I don't know her at all. Is she like me?"

*The present Duchess of Leeds.

Baron Hirsch: "Not in the least; but you and she are the only girls I have met that I could wish my son to marry."

I longed to know what my rival was like, but all he could tell me was that she was lovely and clever and *mignonne*, to which I said:

"But she sounds exactly like me!"

This made him laugh:

"I don't believe you know in the least what you are like," he said.

Margot: "You mean I have no idea how plain I am? But what an odd man you are! If I don't know what I'm like, I am sure *you* can't! How do you know that I am not just the sort of adventuress you dread most? I might marry your son and, so far from widening his interests, as you suggest, keep him busy with his coins while I went about everywhere, enjoying myself and spending all your money. In spite of what you say, some man might fall in love with me, you know! Some delightful, clever man. And then Lucien's happiness would be over."

Baron Hirsch: "I do not believe you would ever cheat your husband."

MARGOT: "You never can tell! Would Lady Katie Lambton marry for money?"

BARON HIRSCH: "To be perfectly honest with you, I don't think she would."

MARGOT: "There you are! I know heaps of girls who wouldn't; anyhow, *I* never would!"

BARON HIRSCH: "You are in love with some one else, perhaps, are you?"

It so happened that in the winter I had fallen in love with a man out hunting and was counting the hours till I could meet him again, so the question annoyed me; I thought it vulgar and said, with some dignity:

"If I am, I have never told him so."

My dignity was lost, however, on my host, who persisted. I did not want to give myself away, so, simulating a tone of light banter, I said:

"If I have not confided in the person most interested, why should I tell *you?*"

This was not one of my happiest efforts, for he instantly replied:

"Then he *is* interested in you, is he? Do I know him?"

I felt angry and told him that, because I did not want to marry his son, it did not at all follow that

my affections were engaged elsewhere; and I added:

"I only hope that Mr. Lucien is not as curious as you are, or I should have a very poor time; there is nothing I should hate as much as a jealous husband."

Baron Hirsch: "I don't believe you! If it's tiresome to have a jealous husband, it must be humiliating to have one who is not."

I saw he was trying to conciliate me, so I changed the subject to racing. Being a shrewd man, he thought he might find out whom I was in love with and encouraged me to go on. I told him I knew Fred Archer well, as we had hunted together in the Vale of White Horse. He asked me if he had ever given me a racing tip. I told him the following story:

One day, at Ascot, some of my impecunious Melton friends,—having heard a rumour that Archer, who was riding in the race, had made a bet on the result—came and begged me to find out from him what horse was going to win. I did not listen much to them at first, as I was staring about at the horses, the parasols and the people, but my friends were very much in earnest and began press-

Yours faithfully
F. Archer

FAMOUS JOCKEY WITH WHOM MARGOT ASQUITH HUNTED IN THE VALE OF WHITE HORSE

ing me in lowered voices to be as quick as I could, as they thought that Archer was on the move. It was a grilling day; most men had handkerchiefs or cabbages under their hats; and the dried-up grass in the Paddock was the colour of pea-soup. I saw Fred Archer standing in his cap and jacket with his head hanging down, talking to a well-groomed, under-sized little man, while the favourite—a great, slashing, lazy horse—was walking round and round with the evenness of a metronome. I went boldly up to him and reminded him of how we had cannoned at a fence in the V.W.H. Fred Archer had a face of carved ivory, like the top of an umbrella; he could turn it into a mask or illuminate it with a smile; he had long thin legs, a perfect figure and wonderful charm. He kept a secretary, a revolver and two valets and was a god among the gentry and the jockeys. After giving a slight wink at the under-sized man, he turned away from him to me and, on hearing what I had to say, whispered a magic name in my ear. . . .

I was a popular woman that night in Melton.

Baron Hirsch returned to the charge later on; and I told him definitely that I was the last girl in the world to suit his son.

It is only fair to the memory of Lucien Hirsch to say that he never cared the least about me. He died a short time after this and some one said to the Baron:

"What a fool Margot Tennant was not to have married your son! She would be a rich widow now."

At which he said:

"No one would die if they married Margot Tennant."

CHAPTER VII

PHOENIX PARK MURDERS—REMEDIES FOR IRELAND—TELEPATHY AND PLANCHETTE—VISIT TO BLAVATSKY—SIR CHARLES DILKE'S KISS—VISITS TO GLADSTONE—THE LATE LORD SALISBURY'S POLITICAL PROPHECIES

THE political event that caused the greatest sensation when I was a girl was the murder of Mr. Burke and Lord Frederick Cavendish on May 6, 1882. We were in London at the time; and the news came through on a Sunday. Alfred Lyttelton told me that Lady Frederick Cavendish's butler had broken it to her by rushing into the room saying:

"They have knifed his lordship!"

The news spread from West to East and North to South; groups of people stood talking in the middle of the streets without their hats and every one felt that this terrible outrage was bound to have consequences far beyond the punishment of the criminals.

These murders in the Phœnix Park tended to

confirm Gladstone in his belief that the Irish were people whom we did not understand and that they had better be encouraged to govern themselves. He hoped to convert his colleagues to a like conviction, but Mr. Chamberlain and he disagreed.

Just as I ask myself what would have been the outcome of the Paris Conference if the British had made the League of Nations a genuine first plank in their programme instead of a last postscript, so I wonder what would have happened if Chamberlain had stuck to Gladstone at that time. Gladstone had all the playing cards—as President Wilson had—and was not likely to under-declare his hand, but he was a much older man and I cannot but think that if they had remained together Chamberlain would not have been thrown into the arms of the Tories and the reversion of the Premiership must have gone to him. It seems strange to me that the leaders of the great Conservative party have so often been hired bravos or wandering minstrels with whom it can share no common conviction. I never cease wondering why it cannot produce a man of its own faith. There must be something inherent in its creed that produces sterility.

When Mr. Gladstone went in for Home Rule,

society was rent from top to bottom and even the most devoted friends quarrelled over it. Our family was as much divided as any other.

One day, when Lord Spencer was staying at Glen, I was sent out of the room at dinner for saying that Gladstone had made a Balaclava blunder with his stupid Home Rule; we had all got so heated over the discussion that I was glad enough to obey my papa. A few minutes later he came out full of penitence to see if he had hurt my feelings; he found me sitting on the billiard-table smoking one of his best cigars. I gave him a good hug, and told him I would join him when I had finished smoking; he said he was only too glad that his cigars were appreciated and returned to the dining-room in high spirits.

Events have proved that I was quite wrong about Home Rule. Now that we have discovered what the consequences are of withholding from Ireland the self-government which for generations she has asked for, can we doubt that Gladstone should have been vigorously backed in his attempt to still the controversy? As it is, our follies in Ireland have cursed the political life of this country for years. Some one has said, *"L'Irlande est une maladie in-*

curable mais jamais mortelle"; and, if she can survive the present *régime,* no one will doubt the truth of the saying.

In May, June and July, 1914, within three months of the war, every donkey in London was cutting, or trying to cut us, for wishing to settle this very same Irish question. My presence at a ball with Elizabeth—who was seventeen—was considered not only provocative to others but a danger to myself. All the brains of all the landlords in Ireland, backed by half the brains of half the landlords in England, had ranged themselves behind Sir Edward Carson, his army and his Covenant. Earnest Irish patriots had turned their fields into camps and their houses into hospitals; aristocratic females had been making bandages for months, when von Kühlmann, Secretary of the German Embassy in London, went over to pay his first visit to Ireland. On his return he told me with conviction that, from all he had heard and seen out there during a long tour, nothing but a miracle could avert civil war, to which I replied:

"Shocking as that would be, it would not break England."

DR. BENJAMIN JOWETT, THE FAMOUS
MASTER OF BALLIOL

Our follies in Ireland have cursed not only the political but the social life of this country.

It was not until the political ostracisms over Home Rule began all over again in 1914 that I realised how powerful socially my friends and I were in the 'eighties.

Mr. Balfour once told me that, before our particular group of friends—generally known as the Souls—appeared in London, prominent politicians of opposite parties seldom if ever met one another; and he added:

"No history of our time will be complete unless the influence of the Souls upon society is dispassionately and accurately recorded."

The same question of Home Rule that threw London back to the old parochialisms in 1914 was at its height in 1886 and 1887; but at our house in Grosvenor Square and later in those of the Souls, everyone met—Randolph Churchill, Gladstone, Asquith, Morley, Chamberlain, Balfour, Rosebery, Salisbury, Hartington, Harcourt and, I might add, jockeys, actors, the Prince of Wales and every ambassador in London. We never cut anybody—not even our friends—or thought it amusing or dis-

tinguished to make people feel uncomfortable; and our decision not to sacrifice private friendship to public politics was envied in every capital in Europe. It made London the centre of the most interesting society in the world and gave men of different tempers and opposite beliefs an opportunity of discussing them without heat and without reporters. There is no individual or group among us powerful enough to succeed in having a salon of this kind to-day.

The daring of that change in society cannot be over-estimated. The unconscious and accidental grouping of brilliant, sincere and loyal friends like ourselves gave rise to so much jealousy and discussion that I shall devote a chapter of this book to the Souls.

It was at No. 40 Grosvenor Square that Gladstone met Lord Randolph Churchill. The latter had made himself famous by attacking and abusing the Grand Old Man with such virulence that every one thought it impossible that they could ever meet in intimacy again. I was not awed by this, but asked them to a luncheon party; and they both accepted. I need hardly say that when they met they talked with fluency and interest, for it was as im-

possible for Gladstone to be *gauche* or rude as it was for any one to be ill at ease with Randolph Churchill. The news of their lunching with us spread all over London; and the West-end buzzed round me with questions: all the political ladies, including the Duchess of Manchester, were torn with curiosity to know whether Randolph was going to join the Liberal Party. I refused to gratify their curiosity, but managed to convey a general impression that at any moment our ranks, having lost Mr. Chamberlain, were going to be reinforced by Lord Randolph Churchill.

The Duchess of Manchester (who became the late Duchess of Devonshire) was the last great political lady in London society as I have known it. The secret of her power lay not only in her position—many people are rich and grand, gay and clever and live in big houses—but in her elasticity, her careful criticisms, her sense of justice and discretion. She not only kept her own but other people's secrets; and she added to a considerable effrontery and intrepid courage, real kindness of heart. I have heard her reprove and mildly ridicule all her guests, both at Compton Place and at Chatsworth, from the Prince of Wales to the Prime Min-

ister. I asked her once what she thought of a certain famous lady, whose arrogance and vulgarity had annoyed us all, to which she answered:

"I dislike her too much to be a good judge of her."

One evening, many years after the time of which I am writing, she was dining with us, and we were talking *tête-à-tête.*

"Margot," she said, "you and I are very much alike."

It was impossible to imagine two more different beings than myself and the Duchess of Devonshire —morally, physically or intellectually—so I asked her what possible reason she had for thinking so, to which she answered:

"We have both married angels; when Hartington dies he will go straight to Heaven"—pointing her first finger high above her head—"and when Mr. Asquith dies he will go straight there, too; not so Lord Salisbury," pointing her finger with a diving movement to the floor.

You met every one at her house, but she told me that before 1886-87 political opponents hardly ever saw one another and society was much duller.

One day in 1901 my husband and I were staying

at Chatsworth. There was a huge house-party, including Arthur Balfour and Chamberlain. Before going down to dinner, Henry came into my bedroom and told me he had had a telegram to say that Queen Victoria was very ill and he feared the worst; he added that it was a profound secret and that I was to tell no one. After dinner I was asked by the Duchess' granddaughters—Lady Aldra and Lady Mary Acheson—to join them at planchette, so, to please them, I put my hand upon the board. I was listening to what the Duchess was saying, and my mind was a blank. After the girls and I had scratched about for a little time, one of them took the paper off the board and read out loud:

"The Queen is dying." She added, "What Queen can that be?"

We gathered round her and all looked at the writing; and there I read distinctly out of a lot of hieroglyphics:

"The Queen is dying."

If the three of us had combined to try to write this and had poked about all night, we could not have done it.

I have had many interesting personal experiences of untraceable communication and telepathy and I

think that people who set themselves against all this side of life are excessively stupid; but I do not connect them with religion any more than with Marconi and I shall always look upon it as a misfortune that people can be found sufficiently material to be consoled by the rubbish they listen to in the dark at expensive séances.

At one time, under the influence of Mr. Percy Wyndham, Frederic Myers and Edmund Gurney (the last-named a dear friend with whom I corresponded for some months before he committed suicide), Laura and I went through a period of "spooks." There was no more delightful companion than Mr. Percy Wyndham; he adored us and, though himself a firm believer in the spirit world, he did not resent it if others disagreed with him. We attended every kind of séance and took the matter up quite seriously.

Then, as now, everything was conducted in the dark. The famous medium of that day was a Russian Jewess, Madame Blavatsky by name. We were asked to meet her at tea, in the dining-room of a private house in Brook Street, a non-professional affair, merely a little gathering to hear her views upon God. On our arrival I had a good look at her

heavy, white face, as deeply pitted with smallpox as a solitaire board, and I wondered if she hailed from Moscow or Margate. She was tightly surrounded by stenuous and palpitating ladies and all the blinds were up. Seeing no vacant seat near her, I sat down upon a low, stuffed chair in the window. After making a substantial tea, she was seen to give a sobbing and convulsive shudder, which caused the greatest excitement; the company closed up round her in a circle of sympathy and concern. When pressed to say why her bust had heaved and eyelids flickered, she replied:

"A murderer has passed below our windows."

The awe-struck ladies questioned her reverently but ardently as to how she knew and what she felt. Had she visualised him? Would she recognise the guilty one if she saw him and, after recognising him, feel it on her conscience if she did not give him up to the law? One lady proposed that we should all go round to the nearest police-station and added that a case of this kind, if proved, would do more to dispell doubts on spirits than all the successful raps, taps, turns and tables. Being the only person in the window at the time, I strained my eyes

up and down Brook Street to see the murderer, but there was not a creature in sight.

Madame Blavatsky turned out to be an audacious swindler.

To return to Chatsworth: our host, the Duke of Devonshire, was a man whose like we shall never see again; he stood by himself and could have come from no country in the world but England. He had the figure and appearance of an artisan, with the brevity of a peasant, the courtesy of a king and the noisy sense of humour of a Falstaff. He gave a great, wheezy guffaw at all the right things, and was possessed of endless wisdom. He was perfectly disengaged from himself, fearlessly truthful and without pettiness of any kind.

Bryan, the American politician, who came over here and heard all our big guns speak—Rosebery, Chamberlain, Asquith, etc.—when asked what he thought, said that a Chamberlain was not unknown to them in America, and that they could produce a Rosebery or an Asquith, but that a Hartington no man could find. His speaking was the finest example of pile-driving the world had ever seen.

After the Prince and Princess of Wales, the Duke and his wife were the great social, semi-poli-

tical figures of my youth. One day they came to pay us a visit in Cavendish Square, having heard that our top storey had been destroyed by fire. They walked round the scorched walls of the drawing-room, with the blue sky overhead, and stopped in front of a picture of a race-horse, given to me on my wedding day by my habit-maker, Alexander Scott (a Scotchman who at my suggestion had made the first patent safety riding-skirt). The Duke said:

"I am sorry that your Zoffany and Longhi were burnt, but I myself would far rather have the Herring."*

The Duchess laughed at this and asked me if my baby had suffered from shock, adding:

"I should be sorry if my little friend, Elizabeth, has had a fright."

I told her that luckily she was out of London at the time of the fire. When the Duchess got back to Devonshire House, she sent Elizabeth two tall red wax candles, with a note in which she said:

"When you brought your little girl here, she wanted the big red candles in my boudoir and I

*A portrait by J. F. Herring, sen., of Rockingham, winner of the St. Leger Stakes, 1833, ridden by Sam Darling.

gave them to her; they must have melted in the fire, so I send her these new ones."

I was walking alone on the high road at Chatsworth one afternoon in winter, while the Duchess was indoors playing cards, when I saw the family barouche, a vast vehicle which swung and swayed on C-springs, stuck in the middle of a ploughed field, the horses plunging about in unsuccessful efforts to drag the wheels out of the mud. The coachman was accompanied by a page, under life size. Observing their dilemma, I said:

"Hullo, you're in a nice fix! What induced you to go into that field?"

The coachman, who knew me well, explained that they had met a hearse in the narrow part of the road and, as her Grace's orders were that no carriage was to pass a funeral if it could be avoided, he had turned into the field, where the mud was so deep and heavy that they were stuck. It took me some time to get assistance; but, after I had unfastened the bearing-reins and mobilised the yokels, the coachman, carriage and I returned safely to the house.

Death was the only thing of which I ever saw the

Duchess afraid and, when I referred to the carriage incident and chaffed her about it, she said:

"My dear child, do you mean to tell me you would not mind dying? What do you feel about it?"

I answered her, in all sincerity, that I would mind more than anything in the world, but not because I was afraid, and that hearses did not affect me in the least.

She asked me what I was most interested in after hunting and I said politics. I told her I had always prophesied I would marry a Prime Minister and live in high political circles. This amused her and we had many discussions about politics and people. She was interested in my youth and upbringing and made me tell her about it.

. . . . . .

As I have said before, we were not popular in Peeblesshire. My papa and his vital family disturbed the country conventions; and all Liberals were looked upon as aliens by the Scottish aristocracy of those days. At election times the mill-hands of both sexes were locked up for fear of rows, but in spite of this the locks were broken and the rows were perpetual. When my father turned out the sitting Tory, Sir Graham Montgomery, in 1880,

there were high jinks in Peebles. I pinned the Liberal colours, with the deftness of a pick-pocket, to the coat-tails of several of the unsuspecting Tory landlords, who had come from great distances to vote. This delighted the electors, most of whom were feather-stitching up and down the High Street, more familiar with drink than jokes.

The first politicians of note that came to stay with us when I was a girl were Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke. Just as, later on, my friends (the Souls) discussed which would go farthest, George Curzon, George Wyndham or Harry Cust, so in those days people were asking the same question about Chamberlain and Dilke. To my mind it wanted no witch to predict that Chamberlain would beat not only Dilke but other men; and Gladstone made a profound mistake in not making him a Secretary of State in his Government of 1885.

Mr. Chamberlain never deceived himself, which is more than could be said of some of the famous politicians of that day. He also possessed a rare measure of intellectual control. Self-mastery was his idiosyncrasy; it was particularly noticeable in his speaking; he encouraged in himself such scrupulous

economy of gesture, movement and colour that, after hearing him many times, I came to the definite conclusion that Chamberlain's opponents were snowed under by his accumulated moderation. Whatever Dilke's native impulses were, no one could say that he controlled them. Besides a defective sense of humour, he was fundamentally commonplace and had no key to his mind, which makes every one ultimately dull. My father, being an ardent Radical, with a passion for any one that Gladstone patronised, had made elaborate preparations for Dilke's reception; when he arrived at Glen he was given a warm welcome; and we all sat down to tea. After hearing him talk uninterruptedly for hours and watching his stuffy face and slow, protruding eyes, I said to Laura:

"He may be a very clever man, but he has not a ray of humour and hardly any sensibility. If he were a horse, I would certainly not buy him!"

With which she entirely agreed.

On the second night of his visit, our distinguished guest met Laura in the passage on her way to bed; he said to her:

"If you will kiss me, I will give you a signed photograph of myself."

To which she answered:

"It is awfully good of you, Sir Charles, but I would rather not, for what on earth should I do with the photograph?"

. . . . . .

Mr. Gladstone was the dominating politician of the day, and excited more adoration and hatred than any one.

After my first visit to Hawarden, he sent me the following poem, which he had written the night before I left:

MARGOT

When Parliament ceases and comes the recess,
And we seek in the country rest after distress,
As a rule upon visitors place an embargo,
But make an exception in favour of Margot.

For she brings such a treasure of movement and life,
Fun, spirit and stir, to folk weary with strife.
Though young and though fair, who can hold such a cargo
Of all the good qualities going as Margot?

Up hill and down dale, 'tis a capital name
To blossom in friendship, to sparkle in fame;
There's but one objection can light upon Margot,
Its likeness in rhyming, not meaning, to *argot*.

Never mind, never mind, we will give it the slip,
'Tis not *argot*, the language, but *Argo*, the ship;
And by sea or by land, I will swear you may far go
Before you can hit on a double for Margot.

W. E. G.

December 17*th*, 1889.

I received this at Glen by the second post on the day of my arrivad, too soon for me to imagine my host had written it, so I wrote to our dear old friend, Godfrey Webb—always under suspicion of playing jokes upon us—to say that he had overdone it this time, as Gladstone had too good a hand-writing for him to caricature convincingly. When I found that I was wrong, I wrote to my poet:

Dec. 19*th*, 1889.

VERY DEAR AND HONOURED MR. GLADSTONE,

At first I thought your poem must have been a joke, written by some one who knew of my feelings for you and my visit to Hawarden; but, when I saw the signature and the post-mark, I was convinced it could be but from you. It has had the intoxicating effect of turning my head with pleasure; if I began I should never cease thanking you. Getting four rhymes to my name emphasizes your uncommon genius, I think! And Argo the ship is quite a new idea and a charming one. I love the third verse; that Margot is a capital name to blossom in friendship and sparkle in fame. You must allow

me to say that you are ever such a dear. It is impossible to believe that you will be eighty to-morrow, but I like to think of it, for it gives most people an opportunity of seeing how life should be lived without being spent.

There is no blessing, beauty or achievement that I do not wish you.

In truth and sincerity,
Yours,
MARGOT TENNANT.

A propos of this, twelve years later I received the following letter from Lord Morley:

THE RED HOUSE,
HAWARDEN,
CHESTER,
July 18*th*, 1901.

I have just had such a cheerful quarter-of-an-hour—a packet of *your* letters to Mr. G. Think—! I've read them all!—and they bring the writer back to me with queer and tender vividness. Such a change from Bishops! ! ! Why do you never address *me* as "Very dear and honoured Sir"? I'm not quite eighty-five yet, but I soon shall be.

Ever yours,
JOHN MORLEY.

I have heard people say that the Gladstone family never allowed him to read a newspaper with anything hostile to himself in it; all this is the greatest rubbish; no one interfered with his reading. The

SKETCH BY MARGOT OF GLADSTONE FELLING A TREE

I drew this pencil sketch of Mr. Gladstone while he was cutting down a tree in the Cricket Field on Wednesday, 5th November 1890. A reporter standing near asked me for it to put in the *Evening Dispatch* and then sent me the proof and got my permission to publish it.

MARGOT'S SKETCH OF GLADSTONE AS IT WAS ACTUALLY REPRODUCED IN "THE EVENING DISPATCH"

same silly things were said about the great men of that day as of this and will continue to be said; and the same silly geese will believe them. I never observed that Gladstone was more easily flattered than other men. He *was* more flattered and by more people, because he was a bigger man and lived a longer life; but he was remarkably free from vanity of any kind. He would always laugh at a good thing, if you chose the right moment in which to tell it to him; but there were moods in which he was not inclined to be amused.

Once, when he and I were talking of Jane Welsh Carlyle, I told him that a friend of Carlyle's, an old man whom I met at Balliol, had told me that one of his favourite stories was of an Irishman who, when asked where he was driving his pig to, said:

"Cark. . . ." (Cork.)

"But," said his interlocutor, "your head is turned to Mullingar. . . . !"

To which the man replied:

"Whist! He'll hear ye!"

This delighted Mr. Gladstone. I also told him one of Jowett's favourite stories, of how George IV. went down to Portsmouth for some big function and met a famous admiral of the day. He

clapped him on the back and said in a loud voice:

"Well, my dear Admiral, I hear you are the greatest blackguard in Portsmouth!"

At which the Admiral drew himself up, saluted the King and said:

"I hope, Sir, *you* have not come down to take away my reputation."

I find in an old diary an account of a drive I had with Gladstone after my sister Laura died. This is what I wrote:

"On Saturday, 29th May, 1886, Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone came to pay us a visit at 40 Grosvenor Square. Papa had been arranging the drawing-room preparatory to their arrival and was in high spirits. I was afraid he might resent my wish to take Mr. Gladstone up to my room after lunch and talk to him alone. However, Aunty Pussy—as we called Mrs. Gladstone—with a great deal of winking, led papa away and said to mamma:

" 'William and Margot are going to have a little talk!'

"I had not met or seen Mr. Gladstone since Laura's death.

"When he had climbed up to my boudoir, he

walked to the window and admired the trees in the square, deploring their uselessness and asking whether the street lamp—which crossed the square path in the line of our eyes—was a child.

"I asked him if he would approve of the square railings being taken away and the glass and trees made into a *place* with seats, such as you see in foreign towns, not merely for the convenience of sitting down, but for the happiness of invalids and idlers who court the shade or the sun. This met with his approval, but he said with some truth that the only people who could do this—or prevent it—were 'the resident aristocracy.'

"He asked if Laura had often spoken of death. I said yes and that she had written about it in a way that was neither morbid nor terrible. I showed him some prayers she had scribbled in a book, against worldliness and high spirits. He listened with reverence and interest. I don't think I ever saw his face wear the expression that Millais painted in our picture as distinctly as when, closing the book, he said to me:

" 'It requires very little faith to believe that so rare a creature as your sister Laura is blessed and with God.'

"Aunty Pussy came into the room and the conversation turned to Laurence Oliphant's objection to visiting the graves of those we love. They disagreed with this and he said:

" 'I think, on the contrary, one should encourage oneself to find consolation in the few tangible memories that one can claim; it should not lessen faith in their spirits; and there is surely a silent lesson to be learnt from the tombstone.'

"Papa and mamma came in and we all went down to tea. Mr. G., feeling relieved by the change of scene and topic, began to talk and said he regretted all his life having missed the opportunity of knowing Sir Walter Scott, Dr. Arnold and Lord Melbourne. He told us a favourite story of his. He said:

" 'An association of ladies wrote and asked me to send them a few words on that unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots. In the penury of my knowledge and the confusion arising from the conflicting estimates of poor Mary, I thought I would write to Bishop Stubbs. All he replied was, "Mary is looking up." '

"After this I drove him back to Downing Street in my phaeton, round the Park and down Knights-

bridge. I told him I found it difficult to judge of people's brains if they were very slow.

"MR. GLADSTONE: "I wish, then, that you had had the privilege of knowing Mr. Cobden; he was at once the slowest and quite one of the cleverest men I ever met. Personally I find it far easier to judge of brains than character; perhaps it is because in my line of life motives are very hard to fathom, and constant association with intelligence and cultivation leads to a fair toleration and criticism of all sorts and conditions of men.'

"He talked of Bright and Chamberlain and Lord Dalhousie,* who, he said, was one of the best and most conscientious men he had ever known. He told me that, during the time he had been Prime Minister, he had been personally asked for every great office in the State, including the Archbishopric of Canterbury, and this not by maniacs but by highly respectable men, sometimes even his friends. He said that Goschen's critical power was sound and subtle, but that he spoilt his speeches by a touch of bitterness. Mr. Parnell, he said, was a man of genius, born to great things. He had power, decision and reserve; he saw things as they were

*The late Earl of Dalhousie.

and had confidence in himself. (Ten days after this drive, Mr. Gladstone made his last great speech on Irish Home Rule.)

"I made him smile by telling him how Lord Kimberley told me that, one day in Dublin, when he was Viceroy, he had received a letter which began:

" 'My Lord, To-morrow we intend to kill you at the corner of Kildare Street; but we would like you to know there is nothing personal in it!'

"He talked all the way down Piccadilly about the Irish character, its wit, charm, grace and intelligence. I nearly landed my phaeton into an omnibus in my anxiety to point out the ingratitude and want of purpose of the Irish; but he said that in the noblest of races the spirit of self-defence had bred mean vices and that generation after generation were born in Ireland with their blood discoloured by hatred of the English Governments.

" 'Tories have no hope, no faith,' he continued, 'and the best of them have class-interest and the spirit of antiquity, but the last has been forgotten, and only class-interest remains. Disraeli was a great Tory. It grieves me to see people believing in Randolph Churchill as his successor, for he has

none of the genius, patience or insight which Dizzy had in no small degree.'

"Mr. Gladstone told me that he was giving a dinner to the Liberal party that night, and he added:

" 'If Hartington is in a good humour, I intend to say to him, "Don't move a vote of want of confidence in me after dinner, or you will very likely carry it." '

" 'He laughed at this, and told me some days after that Lord Hartington had been delighted with the idea.

"He strongly advised me to read a little book by one Miss Tollet, called *Country Conversations,* which had been privately printed, and deplored the vast amount of poor literature that was circulated, 'when an admirable little volume like this cannot be got by the most ardent admirers now the authoress is dead.' " (In parenthesis, I often wish I had been able to tell Mr. Gladstone that Jowett left me this little book and his Shakespeare in his will.)

"We drove through the Green Park and I pulled up on the Horse Guards Parade at the garden-gate of 10 Downing Street. He got out of the phaeton,

unlocked the gate and, turning round, stood with his hat off and his grey hair blowing about his forehead, holding a dark, homespun cape close round his shoulders. He said with great grace that he had enjoyed his drive immensely, that he hoped it would occur again and that I had a way of saying things and a tone of voice that would always remind him of my sister Laura. His dear old face looked furrowed with care and the outline of it was sharp as a profile. I said good-bye to him and drove away; perhaps it was the light of the setting sun, or the wind, or perhaps something else, but my eyes were full of tears."

My husband, in discussing with me Gladstone's sense of humour, told me the following story:

"During the Committee Stage of the Home Rule Bill in the session of 1893, I was one evening in a very thin House, seated by the side of Mr. Gladstone on the Treasury Bench, of which we were the sole occupants. His eyes were half-closed, and he seemed to be absorbed in following the course of a dreary discussion on the supremacy of Parliament. Suddenly he turned to me with an air of great animation and said, in his most solemn

tones, 'Have you ever considered who is the ugliest man in the party opposite?

"Mr. Asquith: 'Certainly; it is without doubt X' (naming a famous Anglo-Indian statesman).

"Mr. Gladstone: 'You are wrong. X is no doubt an ugly fellow, but a much uglier is Y' (naming a Queen's Counsel of those days).

"Mr. Asquith: 'Why should you give him the preference?'

"Mr. Gladstone: 'Apply a very simple test. Imagine them both magnified on a colossal scale. X's ugliness would then begin to look dignified and even impressive, while the more you enlarged Y the meaner he would become.' "

. . . . . .

I have known seven Prime Ministers—Gladstone, Salisbury, Rosebery, Campbell-Bannerman, Arthur Balfour, Asquith and Lloyd George—every one of them as different from the others as possible. I asked Arthur Balfour once if there was much difference between him and his uncle. I said:

"Lord Salisbury does not care fanatically about culture or literature. He may like Jane Austen, Scott or Sainte-Beuve, for all I know, *but he is not a scholar;* he does not care for Plato, Homer, Virgil

or any of the great classics. He has a wonderful sense of humour and is a beautiful writer, of fine style; but I should say he is above everything a man of science and a Churchman. All this can be said equally well of you."

To which he replied:

"There is a difference. My uncle is a Tory . . . and I am a Liberal."

I delighted in the late Lord Salisbury, both in his speaking and in his conversation. I had a kind of feeling that he could always score off me with such grace, good humour and wit that I would never discover it. He asked me once what my husband thought of his son Hugh's speaking, to which I answered:

"I will not tell you, because you don't know anything about my husband and would not value his opinion. You know nothing about our House of Commons either, Lord Salisbury; only the other day you said in public that you had never even seen Parnell."

Lord Salisbury (*pointing to his waistcoat*): "My figure is not adapted for the narrow seats in your peers' gallery, but I can assure you you are doing me an injustice. I was one of the first to

predict, both in private and in public, that Mr. Asquith would have a very great future. I see no one of his generation, or even among the younger men, at all comparable to him. Will you not gratify my curiosity by telling me what he thinks of my son Hugh's speaking?"

I was luckily able to say that my husband considered Lord Hugh Cecil the best speaker in the House of Commons and indeed anywhere, at which Lord Salisbury remarked:

"Do you think he would say so if he heard him speak on subjects other than the Church?"

I assured him that he had heard him on Free Trade and many subjects and that his opinion remained unchanged. He thought that, if they could unknot themselves and cover more ground, both he and his brother, Bob Cecil, had great futures.

I asked Lord Salisbury if he had ever heard Chamberlain speak (Chamberlain was Secretary of State for the Colonies at the time).

Lord Salisbury: "It is curious you should ask me this. I heard him for the first time this afternoon."

MARGOT: "Where did you hear him? And what was he speaking about?"

LORD SALISBURY: "I heard him at Grosvenor House. Let me see . . . what was he speaking about? . . .(*reflectively*) Australian washer-women? I think . . . or some such thing. . . ."

MARGOT: "What did you think of it?"

LORD SALISBURY: "He seems a good, business-like speaker."

MARGOT: "I suppose at this moment Mr. Chamberlain is as much hated as Gladstone ever was?"

LORD SALISBURY: "There is a difference. Mr. Gladstone was hated, but he was very much loved. Does any one love Mr. Chamberlain?"

One day after this conversation he came to see me, bringing with him a signed photograph of himself. We of the Liberal Party were much exercised over the shadow of Protection which had been presented to us by Mr. Ritchie, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, putting a tax upon corn; and the Conservative Party, with Mr. Balfour as its Prime Minister, was not doing well. We opened the conversation upon his nephew and the fiscal question.

July 6. 1904 Yours very Truly J. Chamberlain

JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, WHO BROKE WITH GLADSTONE OVER IRISH HOME RULE

ON HIS NERVES.

THE MAN AND HIS SHADOW

Political caricature of Mr. Asquith dogging the footsteps of Mr. Chamberlain.

I was shocked by his apparent detachment and said:

"But do you mean to tell me you don't think there is any danger of England becoming Protectionist?"

LORD SALISBURY (*with a sweet smile*): "Not the slightest! There will always be a certain number of foolish people who will be Protectionists, but they will easily be overpowered by the wise ones. Have you ever known a man of first-rate intellect in this country who was a Protectionist?"

MARGOT: "I never thought of it, but Lord Milner is the only one I can think of for the moment."

He entirely agreed with me and said:

"No, you need not be anxious. Free Trade will always win against Protection in this country. This will not be the trouble of the future."

MARGOT: "Then what will be?"

LORD SALISBURY: "The House of Lords is the difficulty that I foresee."

I was surprised and incredulous and said quietly:

"Dear Lord Salisbury, I have heard of the House of Lords all my life! But, stupid as it has been, no one will ever have the power to alter it. Why do you prophesy that it will cause trouble?"

LORD SALISBURY: "You may think me vain, Mrs. Asquith, but, as long as I am there, nothing will happen. I understand my lords thoroughly; but, when I go, mistakes will be made: the House of Lords will come into conflict with the Commons."

MARGOT: "You should have taught it better ways! I am afraid it must be your fault!"

LORD SALISBURY (*smiling*): "Perhaps; but what do *you* think will be the next subject of controversy?"

MARGOT: "If what you say is true and Protection *is* impossible in this country, I think the next row will be over the Church of England; it is in a bad way."

I proceeded to denounce the constant building of churches while the parsons' pay was so cruelly small. I said that few good men could afford to go into the Church at all; and the assumed voices, both in the reading and in the preaching, got on the nerves of every one who cared to listen to such a degree that the churches were becoming daily duller and emptier.

He listened with patience to all this and then got up and said:

"Now I must go; I shall not see you again."

Something in his voice made me look at him.

"You aren't ill, are you?" I asked with apprehension.

To which he replied:

"I am going into the country."

I never saw him again and, when I heard of his death, I regretted I had not seen him oftener.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BEAUTIFUL KATE VAUGHAN—COACHED BY COQUELIN IN MOLIÈRE—ROSEBERY'S POPULARITY AND ELOQUENCE—CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN *bon-vivant* AND *boulevardier*—BALFOUR'S MOT; HIS CHARM AND WIT; HIS TASTES AND PREFERENCES; HIS RELIGIOUS SPECULATION

THE next Prime Minister, whom I knew better than either Mr. Gladstone or Lord Salisbury, was Lord Rosebery.

When I was a little girl, my mother took us to stay at Thomas's Hotel, Berkeley Square, to have a course of dancing lessons from the fashionable and famous M. d'Egville. These lessons put me in high spirits, because my master told me I could always make a living on the stage. His remarks were justified by a higher authority ten years later: the beautiful Kate Vaughan of the Gaiety Theatre.

I made her acquaintance in this way: I was a good amateur actress and with the help of Miss Annie Schletter, a friend of mine who is on the English stage now, I thought we might act

Molière's *Précieuses ridicules* together for a charity matinée. Coquelin—the finest actor of Molière that ever lived—was performing in London at the time and promised he would not only coach me in my part but lend his whole company for our performance. He gave me twelve lessons and I worked hard for him. He was intensely particular; and I was more nervous over these lessons than I ever felt riding over high timber. My father was so delighted at what Coquelin said to him about me and my acting that he bought a fine early copy of Molière's plays which he made me give him. I enclose his letter of refusal:

My dearest little Margot,

Je suis très mécontent de vous. Je croyais que vous me traitiez tout à fait en ami, car c'était en ami que j'avais accepté de vous offrir quelques indications sur les Précieuses . . . et voilà que vous m'envoyez un énorme cadeau . . . imprudence d'abord parce que j'ai tous les beaux Molière qui existent et ensuite parce qu'il ne fallait pas envoyer ombre de quoi que ce soit à votre ami Coq.

Je vais tout faire, malgré cela, pour aller vous voir un instant au'jourd'hui, mais je ne suis pas certain d'y parvenir.

Remerciez votre amie Madelon et dîtes-lui bien qu'elle non plus ne me doit absolument rien.

J'aime mieux un tout petit peu de la plus légère

gratitude que n'importe quoi. Conservez, ma chère Margot, un bon souvenir de ce petit travail qui a dû vous amuser beaucoup et qui nous a réunis dans les meilleurs sentiments du monde; continuons nous cette sympathie que je trouve moi tout à fait exquise—et croyez qu'en la continuant de votre côté, vous serez mille fois plus que quitte envers votre très dévoué

Coq.

Coquelin the younger was our stage-manager, and acted the principal part. When it was over and the curtain went down, "Freddy Wellesley's* band" was playing Strauss valses in the *entr'acte,* while the audience was waiting for Kate Vaughan to appear in a short piece called *The Dancing Lesson,* the most beautiful solo dance ever seen. I was alone on the stage and, thinking that no one could see me, I slipped off my Molière hoop of flowered silk and let myself go, in lace petticoats, to the wonderful music. Suddenly I heard a rather Cockney voice say from the wings:

"My Lord! How you can dance! Who taught you, I'd like to know?"

I turned round and saw the lovely face of Kate Vaughan. She wore a long, black, clinging *crêpe-*

* The Hon. F. Wellesley, a famous beau and the husband of Kate Vaughan.

de-chine dress and a little black bonnet with a velvet bow over one ear; her white throat and beautiful arms were bare.

"Why," she said, "you could understudy me, I believe! You come round and I'll show you my parts and *you* will never lack for goldie boys!"

I remember the expression, because I had no idea what she meant by it. She explained that, if I became her under-study at the Gaiety, I would make my fortune. I was surprised that she had taken me for a professional, but not more so than she was when I told her that I had never had a lesson in ballet-dancing in my life.

My lovely coach, however, fell sick and had to give up the stage. She wrote me a charming letter, recommending me to her own dancing-master, M. d'Auban, under whom I studied for several years.

One day, on returning from my early dancing-lesson to Thomas's Hotel, I found my father talking to Lord Rosebery. He said I had better run away; so, after kissing him and shaking hands with the stranger I left the room. As I shut the door, I heard Lord Rosebery say:

"Your girl has beautiful eyes."

I repeated this upstairs, with joy and excitement,

to the family, who, being in a good humour, said they thought it was true enough if my eyes had not been so close together. I took up a glass, had a good look at myself and was reluctantly compelled to agree.

I asked my father about Lord Rosebery afterwards, and he said:

"He is far the most brilliant young man living and will certainly be Prime Minister one day."

Lord Rosebery was born with almost every advantage: he had a beautiful smile, an interesting face, a remarkable voice and natural authority. When at Oxford, he had been too much interested in racing to work and was consequently sent down —a punishment shared at a later date and on different grounds by another distinguished statesman, the present Viscount Grey—but no one could say he was not industrious at the time that I knew him and a man of education. He made his fame first by being Mr. Gladstone's chairman at the political meetings in the great Midlothian campaign, where he became the idol of Scotland. Whenever there was a crowd in the streets or at the station, in either Glasgow or Edinburgh, and

I enquired what it was all about, I always received the same reply:

"Rozbury!"

I think Lord Rosebery would have had a better nervous system and been a happier man if he had not been so rich. Riches are over-estimated in the Old Testament: the good and successful man receives too many animals, wives, apes, she-goats and peacocks. The values are changed in the New: Christ counsels a different perfection and promises another reward. He does not censure the man of great possessions, but He points out that his riches will hamper him in his progress to the Kingdom of Heaven and that he would do better to sell all; and He concludes with the penetrating words:

"Of what profit is it to a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

The soul here is freedom from self.

Lord Rosebery was too thin-skinned, too conscious to be really happy. He was not self-swayed like Gladstone, but he was self-enfolded. He came into power at a time when the fortunes of the Liberal party were at their lowest; and this, coupled with his peculiar sensibility, put a severe strain upon him. Some people thought that he was a man

of genius, morbidly sensitive shrinking from public life and the Press, cursed with insufficient ambition, sudden, baffling, complex and charming. Others thought that he was a man irresistible to his friends and terrible to his enemies, dreaming of Empire, besought by kings and armies to put countries and continents straight, a man whose notice blasted or blessed young men of letters, poets, peers or politicians, who at once scared and compelled every one he met by his freezing silence, his playful smile, or the weight of his moral indignation: the truth being that he was a mixture of both.

Lord Salisbury told me he was the best occasional speaker he had ever heard; and certainly he was an exceptionally gifted person. He came to Glen constantly in my youth and all of us worshipped him. No one was more alarming to the average stranger or more playful and affectionate in intimacy than Lord Rosebery.

An announcement in some obscure paper that he was engaged to be married to me came between us in later years. He was seriously annoyed and thought I ought to have contradicted this. I had never even heard the report till I got a letter in Cairo from Paris, asking if I would not agree to

the high consideration and respectful homages of the writer and allow her to make my chemises. After this, the matter went completely out of my head, till, meeting him one day in London, I was greeted with such frigid self-suppression that I felt quite exhausted. A few months later, our thoughtful Press said I was engaged to be married to Arthur Balfour. As I had seen nothing of Lord Rosebery since he had gone into a period of long mourning, I was acclimatised to doing without him, but to lose Arthur's affection and friendship would have been an irreparable personal loss to me. I need not have been afraid, for this was just the kind of rumour that challenged his insolent indifference to the public and the Press. Seeing me come into Lady Rothschild's ball-room one night, he left the side of the man he was conversing with and with his elastic step stalked down the empty parquet floor to greet me. He asked me to sit down next to him in a conspicuous place; and we talked through two dances. I was told afterwards that some one who had been watching us said to him:

"I hear you are going to marry Margot Tennant."

To which he replied:

"No, that is not so. I rather think of having a career of my own."

. . . . . .

Lord Rosebery's two antagonists, Sir William Harcourt and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, were very different men.

Sir William ought to have lived in the eighteenth century. To illustrate his sense of humour: he told me that women should be played with like fish; only in the one case you angle to make them rise and in the other to make them fall. He had a great deal of wit and nature, impulsive generosity of heart and a temperament that clouded his judgment. He was a man to whom life had added nothing; he was perverse, unreasonable, brilliant, boisterous and kind when I knew him; but he must have been all these in the nursery.

At the time of the split in our party over the Boer War, when we were in opposition and the phrase "methods of barbarism" became famous, my personal friends were in a state of the greatest agitation. Lord Spencer, who rode with me nearly every morning, deplored the attitude which my husband had taken up. He said it would be fatal to his future, dissociating himself from the Pacifists

and the Pro-Boers, and that he feared the Harcourts would never speak to us again. As I was devoted to the latter, and to their son Lulu* and his wife May—still my dear and faithful friends—I felt full of apprehension. We dined with Sir Henry and Lady Lucy one night and found Sir William and Lady Harcourt were of the company. I had no opportunity of approaching either of them before dinner, but when the men came out of the dining-room, Sir William made a bee-line for me. Sitting down, he took my hand in both of his and said:

"My dear little friend, you need not mind any of the quarrels! The Asquith evenings or the Rosebery afternoons, all these things will pass; but your man is the man of the future!"

These were generous words, for, if Lord Morley, my husband and others had backed Sir William Harcourt instead of Lord Rosebery when Gladstone resigned, he would certainly have become Prime Minister.

. . . . . .

I never knew Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman well, but whenever we did meet we had great laughs

*The present Viscount Harcourt.

together. He was essentially a *bon vivant,* a *boulevardier* and a humorist. At an official luncheon given in honour of some foreign Minister, Campbell-Bannerman, in an admirable speech in French—a language with which he was familiar—described Arthur Balfour, who was on one side of him, as *l'enfant gâté* of English politics and Chamberlain, who was also at the lunch, as *l'enfant terrible.*

On the opening day of Parliament, February the 14th, 1905, he made an amusing and telling speech. It was *à propos* of the fiscal controversy which was raging all over England and which was destined to bring the Liberal party into power at the succeeding two general elections. He said that Arthur Balfour was "like a general who, having given the command to his men to attack, found them attacking one another; when informed of this, he shrugs his shoulders and says that he can't help it if they will misunderstand his orders!"

In spite of the serious split in the Liberal Party over the Boer War, involving the disaffection of my husband, Grey and Haldane, Campbell-Bannerman became Prime Minister in 1905.

He did not have a coupon election by arrange-

H. H. Asquith

Margot Asquith

1895

MR. AND MRS. ASQUITH,
AS THEY APPEARED IN 1895,
ONE YEAR AFTER MARGOT'S
MARRIAGE TO THE GREAT
LIBERAL STATESMAN

ment with the Conservative Party to smother his opponents, but asked Henry, before he consulted any one, what office he would take for himself and what he thought suitable for other people in his new Cabinet. Only men of a certain grandeur of character can do these things, but every one who watched the succeeding events would agree that Campbell-Bannerman's generosity was rewarded.

When C.B.—as he was called—went to Downing Street, he was a tired man; his wife was a complete invalid and his own health had been undermined by nursing her. As time went on, the late hours in the House of Commons began to tell upon him and he relegated more and more of his work to my husband.

One evening he sent for Henry to go and see him at 10 Downing Street and, telling him that he was dying, thanked him for all he had done, particularly for his great work on the South African constitution. He turned to him and said:

"Asquith, you are different from the others, and I am glad to have known you . . . God bless you!"

C.B. died a few hours after this.

. . . . . .

I now come to another Prime Minister, Arthur Balfour.

When Lord Morley was writing the life of Gladstone, Arthur Balfour said to me:

"If you see John Morley, give him my love and tell him to be bold and indiscreet."

A biography must not be a brief either for or against its client and it should be the same with an autobiography. In writing about yourself and other living people you must take your courage in both hands. I had thought of putting as a motto on the title-page of this book, "As well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb"; but I gave it up when my friends gave me away and I saw it quoted in the newspapers; and I chose Blake and the Bible.

If I have written any words here that wound a friend or an enemy, I can only refer them to my general character and ask to be judged by it. I am not tempted to be spiteful and have never consciously hurt any one in my life; but in this book I must write what I think without fear or favour and with a strict regard to unmodelled truth.

Arthur Balfour was never a standard-bearer. He was a self-indulgent man of simple tastes. For the average person he was as puzzling to under-

stand and as difficult to know as he was easy for me and many others to love. You may say that no average man can know a Prime Minister intimately; but most of us have met strangers whose minds we understood and whose hearts we reached without knowledge and without effort; and some of us have had an equally surprising and more painful experience when, after years of love given and received, we find the friend upon whom we had counted has become a stranger.

He was difficult to understand, because I was never sure that he needed me; and difficult to know intimately, because of his formidable detachment. The most that many of us could hope for was that he had a taste in us as one might have in clocks or furniture.

Balfour was blessed or cursed at his birth, according to individual opinion, by two assets: charm and wits. The first he possessed to a greater degree than any man, except John Morley, that I have ever met. His social distinction, exquisite attention, intellectual tact, cool grace and lovely bend of the head made him not only a flattering listener, but an irresistible companion. The disadvantage of charm—which makes me say cursed or blessed—

is that it inspires every one to combine and smooth the way for you throughout life. As the earnest housemaid removes dust, so all his friends and relations kept disagreeable things from his path; and this gave him more leisure in his life than any one ought to have.

His wits, with which I say that he was also cursed or blessed—quite apart from his brains—gave him confidence in his improvisings and the power to sustain any opinion on any subject, whether he held the opinion or not, with equal brilliance, plausibility and success, according to his desire to dispose of you or the subject. He either finessed with the ethical basis of his intellect or had none. This made him unintelligible to the average man, unforgivable to the fanatic and a god to the blunderer.

On one occasion my husband and I went to a lunch, given by old Mr. McEwan, to meet Mr. Frank Harris. I might have said what my sister Laura did, when asked if she had enjoyed herself at a similar meal. "I would not have enjoyed it if I hadn't been there," as, with the exception of Arthur Balfour, I did not know a soul in the room. He sat like a prince, with his sphinx-like imperviousness to bores, courteous and concentrated on the lan-

guishing conversation. I made a few gallant efforts and my husband, who is particularly good on these self-conscious occasions, did his best . . . but to no purpose.

Frank Harris, in a general disquisition to the table, at last turned to Arthur Balfour and said, with an air of finality:

"The fact is, Mr. Balfour, all the faults of the age come from Christianity and journalism."

To which Arthur replied with rapier quickness and a child-like air:

"Christianity, of course . . . but why journalism?"

When men said, which they have done now for over thirty years, that Arthur Balfour was too much of a philosopher to be really interested in politics, I always contradicted them. With his intellectual taste, perfect literary style and keen interest in philosophy and religion, nothing but a great love of politics could account for his not having given up more of his time to writing. People thought that he was not interested because he had nothing active in his political aspirations; he saw nothing that needed changing. Low wages, drink,

disease, sweating and overcrowding did not concern him; they left him cold, and he had not the power to express moral indignation which he was too detached to feel.

He was a great Parliamentarian, a brilliant debater and a famous Irish Secretary in difficult times, but his political energies lay in tactics. He took a Puck-like pleasure in watching the game of party politics, not in the interests of any particular political party, nor from *esprit de corps,* but from taste. This was very conspicuous in the years 1903 to 1906, during the fiscal controversy; but any one with observation could watch this peculiarity carried to a fine art wherever and whenever the Government to which he might be attached was in a tight place.

Politically, what he cared most about were problems of national defence. He inaugurated the Committee of Defence and appointed as its permanent Chairman the Prime Minister of the day; everything connected with the size of the army and navy interested him. The size of your army, however, must depend on the aims and quality of your diplomacy; and, if you have Junkers in your For-

eign Office and jesters on your War Staff, you must have permanent conscription. It is difficult to imagine any one in this country advocating a large standing army plus a navy, which is vital to us; but such there were and such there will always be. With the minds of these militarists, protectionists and conscriptionists, Arthur Balfour had nothing in common at any time. He and the men of his opinions were called the Blue Water School; they deprecated fear of invasion and in consequence were violently attacked by the Tories. But, in spite of an army corps of enthusiasts kept upon our coasts to watch the traitors with towels signalling to the sea with full instructions where to drive the county cows to, no German army during the great War attempted to land upon our shores, thus amply justifying Arthur Balfour's views.

The artists who have expressed with the greatest perfection human experience, from an external point of view, he delighted in. He preferred appeals to his intellect rather than claims upon his feelings. Händel in music, Pope in poetry, Scott in narration, Jane Austen in fiction and Sainte-Beuve in criticism supplied him with everything he

wanted. He hated introspection and shunned emotion.

What interested me most and what I liked best in Arthur Balfour was not his charm or his wit—and not his politics—but his writing and his religion.

Any one who has read his books with a searching mind will perceive that his faith in God is what has really moved him in life; and no one can say that he has not shown passion here. Religious speculation and contemplation were so much more to him than anything else that he felt justified in treating politics and society with a certain levity.

His mother, Lady Blanche Balfour, was a sister of the late Lord Salisbury and a woman of influence. I was deeply impressed by her character as described in a short private life of her written by the late minister of Whittingehame, Mr. Robertson. I should be curious to know, if it were possible, how many men and women of mark in this generation have had religious mothers. I think much fewer than in mine. My husband's mother, Mr. McKenna's and Lord Haldane's were all profoundly religious.

This is part of one of Lady Blanche Balfour's prayers, written at the age of twenty-six:

From the dangers of metaphysical subtleties and from profitless speculation on the origin of evil —Good Lord deliver me.

From hardness of manner, coldness, misplaced sarcasm, and all errors and imperfections of manner or habit, from words and deeds by which Thy good may be evil-spoken of through me, or not promoted to the utmost of my ability—Good Lord deliver me.

Teach me my duties to superiors, equals and inferiors. Give me gentleness and kindliness of manner and perfect tact; a thoughtful heart such as Thou lovest; leisure to care for the little things of others, and a habit of realising in my own mind their positions and feelings.

Give me grace to trust my children—with the peace that passeth all understanding—to Thy love and care. Teach me to use my influence over each and all, especially children and servants, aright, that I may give account of this, as well as of every other talent, with joy—and especially that I may guide with the love and wisdom which are far above the religious education of my children.

By Lady Blanche Balfour, 1851.

Born and bred in the Lowlands of Scotland, Arthur Balfour avoided the narrowness and materialism of the extreme High Church; but he was a

strong Churchman. I wrote in a very early diary: "I wish Arthur would write something striking on the Established Church, as he could express better than any one living how much its influence for good in the future will depend on the spirit in which it is worked."

His mind was more critical than constructive; and those of his religious writings which I have read have been purely analytical. My attention was first arrested by an address he delivered at the Church Congress at Manchester in 1888. The subject which he chose was Positivism, without any special reference to the peculiarities of Comte's system. He called it *The Religion of Humanity.** In this essay he first dismisses the purely scientific and then goes on to discuss the Positivist view of man. The following passages will give some idea of his manner and style of writing:

Man, so far as natural science itself is able to teach us, is no longer the final cause of the universe, the heaven-descended heir of all the ages. His very existence is an accident, his history a brief and discreditable episode in the life of one of the meanest of the planets. Of the combination of causes

*An essay delivered at the Church Congress, Manchester, and printed in a pamphlet.

which first converted a piece or pieces of unorganised jelly into the living progenitors of humanity, science indeed, as yet, knows nothing. It is enough that from such beginnings, Famine, Disease, and Mutual Slaughter, fit nurses of the future lord of creation, have gradually evolved, after infinite travail, a race with conscience enough to know that it is vile, and intelligence enough to know that it is insignificant. We survey the past and see that its history is of blood and tears, of helpless blundering, of wild revolt, of stupid acquiescence, of empty aspirations. We sound the future, and learn that after a period, long compared with the individual life, but short indeed compared with the divisions of time open to our investigation, the energies of our system will decay, the glory of the sun will be dimmed, and the earth, tideless and inert, will no longer tolerate the race which has for a moment disturbed its solitude. Man will go down into the pit, and all his thoughts will perish. The uneasy consciousness, which in this obscure corner has for a brief space broken the contented silence of the Universe, will be at rest. Matter will know itself no longer. Imperishable monuments and immortal deeds, death itself, and love stronger than death, will be as though they had never been. Nor will anything that is be better or be worse for all that the labour, genius, devotion, and suffering of man have striven through countless generations to effect.

He continues on Positivism as an influence that cannot be disregarded:

One of the objects of the "religion of humanity," and it is an object beyond all praise, is to stimulate the imagination till it lovingly embraces the remotest fortunes of the whole human family. But in proportion as this end is successfully attained, in proportion as we are taught by this or any other religion to neglect the transient and the personal, and to count ourselves as labourers for that which is universal and abiding, so surely must be the increasing range which science is giving to our vision over the time and spaces of the material universe, and the decreasing importance of the place which man is seen to occupy in it, strike coldly on our moral imagination, if so be that the material universe is all we have to do with. My contention is that every such religion and every such philosophy, so long as it insists on regarding man as merely a phenomenon among phenomena, a natural object among other natural objects, is condemned by science to failure as an effective stimulus to high endeavour. Love, pity, and endurance it may indeed leave with us; and this is well. But it so dwarfs and impoverishes the ideal end of human effort, that though it may encourage us to die with dignity, it hardly permits us to live with hope.

Apart from the unvarying love I have always had for Arthur Balfour, I should be untrue to myself if I did not feel deeply grateful for the unchanging friendship of a man who can think and write like this.

. . . . . .

Of the other two Prime Ministers I cannot write, though no one knows them better than I do. By no device of mine could I conceal my feelings; both their names will live with lustre, without my conscience being chargeable with frigid impartiality or fervent partisanship, and no one will deny that all of us should be allowed some "private property in thought."

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